



# NAVY NEWS

JUNE 2012

**BIG EASY  
GOING  
MONTROSE IN  
NEW ORLEANS**



It's a month of national festivities – and the Naval Service is at the heart of the events. We feature the celebrations for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee at Windsor Castle, and the arrival of the Olympic torch at RNAS Culdrose. Cpl Neil Dudley, bass player in the RM Band Collingwood, performs at the Windsor Parade and Muster. See pages 2-3 for details. Picture: LA(Phot) Gary Weatherston

# HIGH NOTE







# 'An amazing couple o

## PHEW. Where to begin?

The Queen. David Beckham. Seb Coe. The Duke of Edinburgh. Nick Clegg. Princess Anne. Chris Evans. Prince Charles. Sophie Raworth. The Duke of York. Ben Ainslie. A unique flypast. A unique flight. A cast of thousands. An audience of tens of thousands. A TV audience of millions, possibly billions.

Two once-in-a-lifetime events in the space of 24 hours. That doesn't happen often. (Well, once in a lifetime...)

At Culdrose, the arrival of the Olympic flame to fanfares and much ceremony...

...and just 15 hours later, a parade and muster in the grounds of Windsor Castle... to fanfares and much ceremony...

The two events, with the men and women of the Senior Service at their very heart, kicked off what should be a summer to live long in the memory.

It all began just before 7.30pm on Friday May 18 and a rather murky RNAS Culdrose.

Out of the gloom, a Firefly, British Airways Airbus BA2012, painted gold and yellow.

In a specially-built arena next to the runway 500 people – from the great and the good to former Olympians, locals and 100 schoolchildren.

They were almost outnumbered by the world's press – 150 journalists, reporters, cameramen and photographers, and a similar number of BBC staff, broadcasting proceedings live on two channels simultaneously.

There were a good few hundred people, not invited, with heads pressed against the perimeter fence eager for a glimpse of history.

For a couple of hours or so, guests had been entertained by the Navy's Black Cats Lynx helicopter display team and the Band of HM Royal Marines.

Much as they enjoyed that, what they were really here to see was perhaps no more than an inch high.

For four hours it was screwed into seat 1A of the Airbus – with three other flames as backup – all in their smart gold lanterns, and all guarded by an official security officer from the Metropolitan Police.

Each flame had been ignited by the rays of the sun in a traditional ceremony in Greece nine days earlier.

The symbol of the Olympiad had travelled around the Peloponnese before being presented to Princess Anne as president of the British Olympic Association in a rather wet Athens.

And from there it came to Cornwall by Firefly – co-piloted by a Culdrose 'old boy', Andy Berryman, who trained with Prince Andrew and served in the Falklands, Balkans and Northern Ireland before joining BA.

The flickering flame was not the only VIP aboard BA2012: there were some 80

passengers including Princess Anne, Games supremo Lord Coe, Olympic ambassador and England football legend David Beckham, London Mayor Boris Johnson, and Sports Minister Hugh Robertson.

And, as a reminder that this summer's sporting spectacle is not purely about celebrity, the plane also carried some of the youngsters who would be running Olympic torches on one of the 8,000 legs of its relay around the UK.

Waiting for the 'custard comet' – a name given by the airliner's crew in homage to its bright livery – was a rather impressive black cauldron, set up on a small stage in the centre of a makeshift amphitheatre.

Also waiting was a welcoming delegation, headed by Culdrose's Commanding Officer Capt Willie Entwistle, deputy PM Nick Clegg, and Fleet Commander Admiral George Zambellas.

And, a rather unusual sight, a British Airways airport stair truck: as a military airfield used to Merlins, Sea Kings and Hawks, Culdrose is unaccustomed to civilian airliners.

Indeed, back in March a rather more ordinary British Airways Airbus touched down on the runway in a dry run.

And as Culdrose is a military airfield, there was none of that rigmarole of waiting for a slot on the standings, or bothersome queues at customs.

Touchdown. Taxi. Roll to a stop. Stairs driven up. *Doors to manual and cross-check.* Unscrew the flame. Hand to royal personage. Open door.

Cue cheers and screaming. Possibly for the flame. Certainly for Beckham.

It fell to the Princess Royal to carry the flame off the airliner, accompanied by Lord Coe and the footballer.

And after a short chat with BBC presenter Sophie Raworth on the stage, it was the responsibility of 'Sir' David Beckham – the Greek media had knighted him the day before – to ignite the cauldron.

With flames licking from the metallic black pot, there was a fanfare from Royal Marines buglers.

Beckham told the cheering crowd: "As a nation we are going to have an amazing couple of months. I am proud to be part of this."

Mr Clegg said the flame's arrival was an historic moment.

He added: "With every step, the excitement will build – and ten weeks from now, the world will watch as the flame arrives at the new Olympic Stadium, bringing with it the hopes of a nation."

There was half an hour or so of glad-handing and autograph signing (Beckham proved particularly popular... and willing) and that was that.

Almost.

For the flame's arrival was just the beginning. Not 11 hours later it would light the first of 8,000 golden Olympic torches at Land's End.

As the gloom turned to dusk and then night, the flame was assigned a VIP suite in the wardroom – one of the staff helpfully wrote 'Flame' and its check-in and check-out date on the cabin door – with a three-strong security team guarding it.

And then Friday May 18 turned to Saturday May 19 and another momentous day would soon dawn.

**I**N 1948, when this nation last hosted the Games, it was the honour of HMS Bicester, a battle-scarred veteran of the war in the Mediterranean, to deliver the Olympic flame to this sceptred isle.

And it was the honour of the ship's CPO Herbert Barnes to run through a crowd 50,000-strong from the docks at Dover to the town's square to pass on the flame to the next of the 72 runners who would continue the journey to the Empire Stadium in Wembley.

In the intervening 64 years, the wheel of history almost turned full circle.

Once again the nation is in the grip of austerity. Once again the Senior Service would light the Olympic fuse.

Back then, the relay lasted little over a day which never went beyond Kent, London and the immediate environs.

In 2012, it is a ten-week affair, beginning not at England's southeastern tip but some 320 miles to the west.

In the half-light of the minutes before dawn, fliers and passengers mustered in the crew room of 771 Naval Air Squadron. Most of those gathered had little sleep behind them.

It was 5.15am when the squadron's Commanding Officer Lt Cdr Martin Shepherd and his colleagues ran through the briefing for today's flight.

Two cabs. One for the flame – Sierra 29 – and the duty Search and Rescue helicopter as back-up. Take-off 0630. Circle St Michael's Mount a couple of times. The same over the Minack open-air theatre. Set down at Land's End 0700. Deliver flame to Ben Ainslie.

By the time the briefing was done the sun was climbing over the eastern horizon to reveal a beautiful day in the South-west. Gone was the gloom of the previous evening.

Come 6.30am the sun was streaming through the cockpit window of Sierra 29, bathing the Olympic lantern and its minder in a suitably ethereal light.

As the distinctive red and grey Sea Kings lifted off from the Culdrose tarmac – accompanied by a BBC helicopter capturing the flight live – the crowds were converging on

pictures: cpo(phot) scooby c







# f months' start here

the English mainland's most westerly point.

Most had risen at the same time as the fliers. By 6.30am there were a good 3,500 people – in places ten deep on the roads and lanes around this normally fairly quiet part of the land.

And, as at Culdrose the night before, the world's media were there in force.

And at 7.01am what they were waiting for arrived as pilots Lt Cdr Shepherd and Lt Chris Whittington, observer Lt Cdr Richard Full and aircrewman Cpl Justin Morgan RM put Sierra 29 down on the grass in front of Land's End visitors' centre.

After the rotors of the Sea King came to a stop, observer Lt Cdr Full clambered out carrying the gold lantern with the Olympic flame; he'd been involved in planning the unique flight for several months – and so the singular honour landed in his lap. Well, right hand.

It was, said Lt Cdr Full, "a real honour" – although he conceded he was "a bit shaky" as he stepped down from the helicopter to carry the flame. "I didn't want to fall over."

Thankfully, he didn't. Flanked by the flame's ever-present security team and applauded by the crowds, he trotted the 600ft to the world-famous signpost, where triple gold medallist Ainslie was waiting for the first leg of the torch relay.

And thus was the 70-day fuse to the biggest sporting event in the UK since the 1966 World Cup ignited.

For Lt Cdr Full, it crowned an unforgettable 12 hours – he'd been present as the flame arrived the previous evening.

The mood on the air base, which employs some 3,000 military and civilian personnel, was "just fantastic, brilliant".

He added: "The whole place came together to produce that one moment."

With the once-in-a-lifetime sortie complete, the 43-year-old observer said the rest of the day was "back to normality" for him and his 771 colleagues.

**B**Y 10.30am the Olympic torch was somewhere between Helston and Falmouth on its eastward journey.

Some 220 miles away 2,500 personnel from the three Services were gathered in Great Park, ready to march the two and a half miles up the undulating tree-lined avenue to the eponymous home of the House of Windsor.

The Parade and Muster was the first national event of this summer's Diamond Jubilee commemorations.

Formed into five platoons, sailors from 16 ships and submarines, all Naval bases and establishments, plus five Fleet Air Arm squadrons, Mike Company Royal Marines and the Band of HM Royal Marines Portsmouth

were the vanguard of the parade as the Senior Service.

For several days they had practised at Longmoor Camp near Petersfield as those skilled in the art of drill made sure that those unaccustomed to marching made the right impression.

Among those being drilled was Lt Doug Wylie RNR, a former PTI with 30 years' experience in the regular Royal Navy.

"It is a real honour and pleasure to march in front of the Queen," he said.

"This is the only time we will be able to celebrate this event in our lifetime and I am proud to be a part of it."

"Longmoor was intense but for most of us it is a brushing up of skills we learnt at HMS Raleigh or BRNC Dartmouth during training."

While the marchers were drilled for four days at Longmoor, a dozen miles to the north, Fleet Air Arm Merlins, Lynx and Sea Kings gathered on the standings at RAF Odiham, home of the Chinook and, for the parade and muster, the home for participating helicopters.

The whirlybirds would be in the van of a flypast over Windsor Castle, in the first of seven waves of aircraft flying through Berkshire skies bringing the curtain down on the pomp and ceremony.

Helicopters from all three Services were represented – and would forge diamond formations.

"The formation itself does look complicated and is very different to the usual way that we would fly but we are trained to be able to adapt to any situation," explained Lt Cdr Chris Trubshaw, CO of 849 NAS – the training squadron for the Bagger Sea Kings.

"It was difficult to get us all together here for the training of the flypast as we all have commitments all over the world. It was a fantastic effort from the whole squadron to get us ready."

As for the experience of taking part, one of his observers, Lt Serena Davison, relished the opportunity to be part of "a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity – none of us will live to see another Queen's Diamond Jubilee so for us to represent the Royal Navy and its aircraft at Windsor is a very proud moment."

Her sentiments were echoed by Jungle Sea King pilot Lt Graham Cannel of 848 NAS.

"It's a great opportunity to take part in such an historic event," he said. "This is a way of saying thank-you for all her support to the Armed Forces over the years."

"I have taken part in many different operations around the world – flying troops around Afghanistan, counter-piracy patrols in the Gulf and worked with the British Antarctic Survey in South Georgia, so this ceremonial work is very different for me, but

very rewarding."

As it was, it was RAF jets which opened proceedings at Windsor: Typhoons flying a 'diamond nine' formation over Windsor Castle, before the parade marched through the Castle Quadrangle in front of the Queen.

Heading through the town, the parade was cheered along by thousands of well-wishers before mustering in a specially-built arena in the grounds of the castle.

The Queen and Duke of Edinburgh made their way along the parade route in a State Bentley to join them.

Already assembled in the audience were other members of the Royal Family, foreign royals, the heads of three Services, ministers, and more than 3,000 Service personnel, their families and veterans.

A drumhead service preceded speeches by the Chief of the Defence Staff and Her Majesty.

"I know I speak for all those who have the privilege to wear her uniform, when I offer my heartfelt thanks to Her Majesty for her dedication to the Armed Forces, and to our country," Chief of the Defence Staff General Sir David Richards told the Queen.

Her Majesty responded by addressing the 2,500 personnel formed up before her:

"It is a tradition of very long standing that the sovereign, and members of the Royal Family, are intimately associated with the Armed Forces and have been proud to serve in all three Services.

"We are very proud of the selfless service, and sacrifices made by Servicemen and women and their families in recent years.

"It is very gratifying to celebrate and take pride in successful achievements, but the real test of character is the ability to maintain morale and a positive spirit in bad times as well as when things are going well."

As well as a hearty 'three cheers' from all personnel assembled, throughout there was the appropriate musical accompaniment from six Forces bands for the event under the charge of Lt Col Nick Grace – the Principal Director of Music Royal Marines and also the Queen's senior music director, taking charge of all massed band events.

Saturday's parade at Windsor was the biggest massed band event for many years, comprising bands from all three Services.

To close the celebrations, that 78-aircraft flypast. First the helicopters; then the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight; RAF Hercules, VC10 and Tornados; Navy and RAF Hawks flying in an "E II R" formation and Tucano training flying in a "60" formation; and finally, to add a spot of colour to proceedings, the Red Arrows.

As the red, white and blue smoke trails dispersed, so too the mustered personnel.

And so ended an unforgettable 24 hours.



dual, frpu east, po(phot) paul a'barrow and la(phot) dave sterratt, rnas culdrose, sgt steve hughes rlc, trooper mark larner ry, jez doak, raf







THERE'S only one way to begin this month: with the Jubileypics.

Because over one (rather manic) 24-hour period, the two once-in-a-lifetime events of 2012, the Olympics and Diamond Jubilee, overlapped for the nation – and for the Navy.

At **RNAS Culdrose**, the Olympic Flame arrived... and then was flown to Land's End by **771 Naval Air Squadron** to begin the first of 8,000 legs on the torch relay... (see page 2).

...Meanwhile at Windsor, personnel from (deep breath), **HMS Ocean, Illustrious, Liverpool, York, Edinburgh, Diamond, Dragon, Defender, Richmond, Lancaster, Turbulent, Torbay, Tireless, Talent, Vanguard, MCM2, 702 NAS, 815 NAS, 824 NAS, 829 NAS, Commando Helicopter Force**, plus every naval base, gathered on the ground for the Diamond Jubilee Parade and Muster, while helicopters from **702 NAS, 815 NAS, 848 NAS**, and **849 NAS**, flew overhead (see page 3).

That's it for the jubilee for this month (there's the river pageant which will feature in our next edition), but for the Olympics, there was another high-profile security exercise ahead of the Games for flagship **HMS Bulwark** (off Weymouth) and Britain's biggest warship, **HMS Ocean**, in London (see page 14).

Bulwark took part in Olympic Guardian on the back of Joint Warrior, the biggest military exercise in Europe this year, with a cast including **Illustrious, St Albans, Enterprise, Bangor, Blyth, Atherstone, Brocklesby, Grimsby, Shoreham** and **45 Commando** (see opposite).

While Britain's flagship sailed for Weymouth, six sailors were plonked (technical term) ashore at five minutes' notice and told to rejoin the ship off Dorset... without any money. Or transport. They got there – and it was quite an adventure (see page 8).

**45 Commando** left Joint Warrior and went straight into the week-long Exercise Scottish Lion in south-west Scotland, aided by **Commando Helicopter Force** (see page 9).

With her Olympic training completed, the Mighty O left London and made straight for Hamburg (see page 7).

Ocean was the second RN ship up the Elbe in seven days; preceding her was **HMS St Albans** which took part in the German port's birthday celebrations; the Saint also visited Iceland to commemorate the Arctic convoys (see page 15).

Also on the commemorative front, **HMS Enterprise** paid her respects to the dead of the Falklands by holding a ceremony over the wreck of **HMS Coventry**, having carried out a survey of the lost Type 42 as well as another victim of Argentinian air attacks in 1982, **HMS Ardent** (see page 6).

After last month's big drugs bust, the successes keep on coming for **HMS Westminster** – three pirate action groups smashed in three weeks during the 'capital ship's' latest patrol of the Indian Ocean (see page 10).

**HMS Dauntless** too has been playing her part in the anti-piracy effort, training with the navies of West Africa as she makes her way to the South Atlantic on her maiden deployment (see page 7).

Dauntless is taking over from HMS Montrose, which ended her deployment on a high courtesy of an enjoyable (and busy) visit to New Orleans (see the centre pages) before returning to Devonport (see right).

Back in home waters, Dauntless' younger sister **HMS Diamond** is ready to deploy having fired her main armament – her Sea Viper anti-air missile – for the first time off Scotland (see page 6).

Further south, P2000 patrol boats **HMS Biter** and **Charger** enjoyed a spring deployment with their students up and down the west coast (see page 20).

Also helping youngsters, the Junglies of **CHF** plus the Lynx of **815 NAS** played their usual part in support of the Ten Tors event on Dartmoor which, for once, wasn't struck by dreadful weather (see page 13).

And finally... **HMS Trenchant** welcomed war hero Robert Read, navigator of the previous T-boat which was a scourge of the Axis powers in WW2. The 92-year-old deep was presented with his Dolphins (see page 31).



● That's my family, that is... One excited senior rating spies loved ones on the jetty

Picture: LA(Phot) Rob Gillies, FRPU West

## 'A sense of achievement'

A RAPTUROUS welcome from cheering banner-waving families greeted the sailors of HMS Montrose from a six-and-a-half-month deployment around the Atlantic.

The ship sailed into Devonport Naval Base to a seven-gun salute with 29 Commando at Plymouth Citadel – upholding a long affiliation – and a Scottish lone piper playing on the ship's bridge wing.

A crowd of over 700 cheering families and friends and Plymouth's Royal Marines Band hailed the crew home from flying the flag as a reassuring naval presence to the UK's Overseas Territories in the North and South Atlantic.

Among the delighted crowd on the jetty waiting for her father WO Glen Harris was Jude White, aged eight weeks, who was born during the ship's deployment.

She was in the arms of her mother Tracey White until scooped into his arms by the senior rating as he stepped off his ship. Glen, of Torquay, said: "It is lovely to see Jade again, she was only two weeks old when I left her. I was allowed to fly home from South Africa for the birth, but hard to tear myself away again. She has grown in six weeks and looks very well."

LStd Jason Bradshaw was overwhelmed by the welcome from some 18 members from his extended family who'd travelled from as far as Ipswich and Helston for the homecoming.

Jason's girlfriend Celia said: "It's a true family welcome. It's fantastic to see Jason again. I have been counting every day down since he left."

LS Matthew Gibson, of Plymouth, was hugged on the jetty by his wife Jo and their children Emily, 20 months, and William, six months. Jo said: "It's been hard work bringing up two young children. Matthew

was allowed to stay behind to see William born. It's great to have him back."

Montrose's CO Commander Jonathan Lett said of his frigate's mission: "Having navigated over 35,000 nautical miles, patrolled in three oceans, visited five continents and six British Overseas Territories there is a real sense of achievement amongst my ship's company."

"From the frozen wastes of the South Sandwich Islands to the tropical paradise of Bermuda we have faced some significant challenges but the team can be justifiably proud of a job well done."

He added: "My ship's company are clearly glad to be home and back with their families after six and a half months away. I am fully aware that much of what we achieved would not have been possible without the support of our loved ones."

"After a long deployment it is vitally important that everyone has the opportunity to take leave, spend time with their families and friends and essentially recharge their batteries in advance of the next challenge."

After deploying on a wet and windy October 24 last year, Montrose visited 13 different ports. She also navigated in and around interesting locations, including rounding Cape Horn, patrolling sub-Antarctic Islands until blocked by ice and then finally transiting the Magellan Straits and the Panama Canal.

Of the United Kingdom's 14 remaining overseas territories, HMS Montrose stopped at six, Ascension, St Helena, the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands, Tristan da Cunha and finally Bermuda, a record matched by few ships in recent years.

■ Montrose in New Orleans, centre pages

## Another block release for new carrier

YET another huge piece of the gigantic jigsaw that is HMS Queen Elizabeth has arrived on the Forth to join the rest of the ever-growing future carrier.

The latest section is Lower Block 02 – 6,000 tonnes of machinery spaces, living quarters and other compartments which will form part of the forward section of the 65,000-tonne warship.

It took four days for the block – the second segment to leave BAE Systems' Portsmouth facility in under a month – to complete the 600-mile journey from the Solent to Rosyth.

Once there, the block was floated off the specialised barge into the waters of the River Forth.

Before it could enter the specially-enlarged dry dock at Rosyth, workers performed a complex move to fit the giant pieces of the jigsaw together.

A 13,000-tonne section of hull already in the dock was floated out to allow Lower Block 02 to move into position and both sections to come together.

While all that was taking place, a team of 50 cyclists from across the Aircraft Carrier Alliance – the Navy-MOD-industry partnership forged to take on the biggest engineering project in the UK after the Olympics – set off to cycle 500 miles from Portsmouth to Rosyth to raise money for the RNRMC. A similar race in Scotland last year to 'beat the block' when another section was delivered to the Babcock yard in Rosyth brought in more than £35,000 for the charity.

"There's a massive sense of achievement as the team has delivered two large sections of HMS Queen Elizabeth in less than four weeks," said Steven Carroll, Queen Elizabeth Class Project Director at BAE Systems.

"I am very proud of the team's achievements, with both blocks departing on time and built to an exceptional standard, which is testament to the skills of our workforce here."

Half a dozen yards around the UK are involved in the carrier project, with some 10,000 people directly or indirectly involved in building sections, parts or providing equipment for the sisters.



## Cats 'n' traps plan axed

FLEET Air Arm pilots will fly Britain's next-generation jet from the Royal Navy's super-carriers five years earlier than planned after the Government reverted to its original decision to buy the jump jet version of the Joint Strike Fighter.

After months of intense media speculation, Defence Secretary Philip Hammond said the cost of and delays to the traditional carrier version of the fighter had become "unacceptable" – and Britain would invest in the short take-off/vertical take-off variant of the stealth jet.

The jump jet model, the F35B, was originally ordered as the 'punch' of Her Majesty's Ships Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales.

But under the 2010 Defence Review, the Government decided it wanted the F35C – with a longer range and greater payload.

The F35C also requires a return to traditional carrier operations, not practised by the RN since the demise of HMS Ark Royal IV in the late 70s: catapult launches and arrestor wires to stop the jets on landing.

Mr Hammond said the cost of adapting the two super-carriers – currently being built at half a dozen yards around the UK, with the Queen Elizabeth taking shape in her assembly dock in Rosyth – had doubled from the original estimate to £2bn.

That price rise and the delays to the F35C programme – current estimates suggest it would have been 2023 before the first jets were flying off the decks of the two 65,000-ton leviathans – plus the progress made with trials involving the jump jet model led the Government to change its 2010 decision.

"The 2010 SDSR decision on carriers was right at the time, but the facts have changed and therefore so too must our approach," said Mr Hammond.

"This Government will not blindly pursue projects and ignore cost growth and delays. Carrier strike with 'cats and traps' using the carrier variant jet no longer represents the best way of delivering carrier strike and I am not prepared to tolerate a three year further delay to reintroducing our Carrier Strike capability.

"This announcement means we remain on course to deliver Carrier Strike in 2020 as a key part of our Future Force 2020."

Britain already has its first jump jet F35 as a trials model; it flew for the first time last month.

In the 18 months since the defence review, the US Marine Corps – which has also invested in the F35B – has conducted extensive trials, including the first flights on to and off its ships.

Queen Elizabeth, which with her sister will be based in Portsmouth, is due to begin sea trials early in 2017.

The first F35 Joint Strike Fighter trials from her deck are now planned for 2018.

## 771 help out the French

RESCUERS from Culdrose scrambled to save an injured fisherman off the French coast when bad weather grounded their counterparts across the Channel.

With conditions worsening off the Brittany coast, the duty crew from 771 Naval Air Squadron safely winched the sailor from the fore-castle of the fishing vessel Antaeus – the crew's fourth rescue in a matter of hours.

Aircraft commander and veteran rescuer Lt Cdr Martin Florry Ford was lowered to the deck of the boat, provided medical assistance, then recovered the injured mariner to the Sea King.

Having flown the casualty to Derriford hospital in Plymouth, the fliers faced a challenge returning to their base.

The weather in south-west Cornwall was so poor that the red and grey helicopter had to make a full radar approach to land safely.

Picture: PO(Phot) Ray Jones, HMS Illustrious



# Knights by moonlight

THIS is rather reminiscent of those evocative nighttime images from HMS Hermes 30 years ago with engineers toiling in the hangar under artificial light to ready Harriers for the coming day.

Of course, it isn't. Hermes is long gone. So too, alas, the Harrier.

This is HMS Illustrious. By night. Somewhere off the coast of Galloway. With Apache gunship and Junglie Sea Kings on deck and Royal Marines of 45 Commando organised in their 'sticks' in the hangar.

For the third time in four months the men and women of Illustrious helped to restore peace and order to a troubled region – in this instance the troubled shores of the Wallian Archipelago (which bears an uncanny resemblance to the Western Isles of Scotland) – during the biggest military exercise in Europe in 2012.

Having restored political relationships between the countries of Ginger and Brownia (aka North Devon) in December last year and having brought security to the Nerthus region of Borgland and Gardarland (aka Norway) in March, it once again fell to the Portsmouth-based helicopter assault ship to ensure that troubled lands were stable.

Some 8,000 personnel from half a dozen nations – including the USA, Germany, Netherlands and Norway – took part in the two-week-long war games, which were designed to develop the ability of aircraft, warships and submarines to operate as part of a multi-national task group in a complex and demanding operational environment.

The exercise was certainly busy for all on board Illustrious. She's hosted Apache helicopters from 656 Squadron Army Air Corps – which earlier this week conducted the first live Hellfire missile firings in the UK – Merlins from 814 NAS and Sea Kings from the Commando Helicopter Force.

As the name would suggest Exercise Joint Warrior is all about testing the ability of the three Services to work together on land, in the air and at sea. And it meant that some of those aboard Lusty found themselves in a strange environment.

"The main difference is that land doesn't move around when you're working on the helicopter!" said Army SSgt Jim Docherty, crew chief maintainer for the Apaches, who described the food on Lusty during his three weeks aboard as excellent... and the accommodation as 'cosy'.

He added: "Working closely with the ship's crew is essential as the hangar and flight deck of the ship has much less space than an airfield. Really careful planning has to go on to ensure that the right helicopter is in the right place at the right time."

As things heated up during the final phase of the exercise, Illustrious had the opportunity to test her ability to embark the Joint Task Force Commander and Headquarters Staff.

This meant that at the height of the exercise, Lusty was home to around 1,150 sailors, Royal Marines, soldiers and airmen (her ship's company is typically around 600-650 strong).

"It certainly was a busy and challenging exercise; HMS Illustrious, her crew and those embarking for the exercise were tested to their limits," explained Illustrious' CO Capt Martin Connell.

"I am very pleased to say that everybody on board, regardless of which service they are from, worked together extremely well to achieve the maximum benefit from Exercise Joint Warrior. HMS Illustrious is now fully ready for whatever may come her way over the next two years."

Whilst much of the media attention was focused on parachute drops and amphibious landings involving the big ships, the RN's smaller vessels were also pushed to the limit by Joint Warrior.

With survey ship HMS Enterprise leading the way, Bangor joined fellow minehunters Atherstone, Brocklesby, Blyth, Grimsby and Shoreham as they set out into the Firth of Clyde to clear dummy mines.

Immediately, the small task group came under attack from a bevy of fast inshore craft – jet skis and rigid inflatable boats – which can cause mayhem to slow moving vessels such as the minehunters.

Having survived the 'swarmex', the force continued into the firth. By the time it had reached Ailsa Craig, Hawk jets

pounced.

This time the small ships were bolstered in their efforts to fend off the air attack by HMS St Albans and her Seawolf missiles.

"After recently completing Operational Sea Training, Joint

Warrior allowed us to operate as part of a task group in a realistic and challenging scenario," said Blyth's CO Lt Cdr Tim Davey.

"This training ensured that we are ready for our NATO deployment this month."

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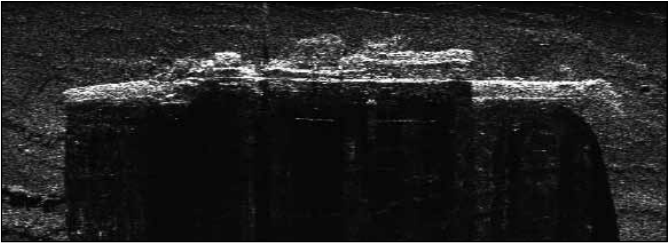


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# Wrecks surveyed

THIS haunting monochrome image is the unmistakeable outline of a Type 42 destroyer.

This is HMS Coventry whose wreck has been surveyed for the first time by HMS Enterprise.

Thirty years after the short but ferocious struggle to liberate the islands, the Devonport-based survey ship passed over the wrecks of two RN ships lost in that conflict: Coventry (off Pebble Island) and Type 21 frigate HMS Ardent (in Falkland Sound).

In both instances, the ship’s company used Enterprise’s hi-tech sonar suite to provide the most accurate scans of the wrecks ever produced.

And in both cases, Enterprise paid her respects – for Coventry the sailors cast a cross-shaped wreath into the South Atlantic, mirroring the famous Cross of Nails presented to the destroyer by her namesake city.

Enterprise’s Commanding Officer, Cdr Jon Holmes, said: “It was a great moment to see the quality of these images and a poignant reminder of the sacrifice that all Armed Forces undergo in times of conflict.

“The technology we use allows much greater detail with these types of investigations. That, combined with the skill of our operators, has delivered some outstanding results.”

Enterprise used her sensors to survey both wrecks, producing images of the two ships which have never been seen before.

“Normally the images we obtain from wrecks are only recognisable to a trained eye but as soon as I saw the processed image of the Ardent, and then the sonar image of the Coventry, I knew the importance of what we had achieved,” said PO(SR) Kerry Collins:

“To be able to survey these wrecks at the anniversary of the conflict was an absolute privilege.

“From a surveyor’s point of view, they are the best images of

wrecks I have seen from nearly 16 years in the branch, but I think the images speak for themselves.”

It was 8pm on May 20 1982 when Type 21 frigate HMS Ardent led Britain’s amphibious task group into Falklands Sound to support landings at San Carlos.

After providing gunfire support for a diversionary raid, Ardent returned to the entrance to San Carlos and waited for Argentinian air attacks.

Throughout the next day she came under repeated attack, sustained substantial damage and suffered large casualties. Her captain, future First Sea Lord Alan West, gave the order to abandon ship and she sank during the night of May 22.

Enterprise’s coxswain, PO Andrew ‘Fris’ Frisby, was serving onboard HMS Argonaut in the Falklands as a junior AB(Missile) when Ardent was hit.

He said: “Both ships were patrolling the sound between East and West Falkland, Argonaut to the north and Ardent to the south. Raids were coming in every two hours – it was a day I will always remember.”

Two days later Coventry sailed to the north of West Falkland as part of a new tactic to smash incoming air raids.

It worked until late in the afternoon of Argentina’s National Day, May 25, when two waves of low-flying Skyhawks attacked Coventry and HMS Broadsword accompanying her.

The two ships survived the first pair –although Broadsword’s Lynx was wrecked by an Argentinian bomb – but not the second wave which saw three bombs smash into Coventry, wrecking her computer room, ops room and forward engine room. She capsized and sank in under 20 minutes, taking 19 souls with her.

# Diamond’s Viper active

THIS searing flash of orange and red is the moment the third of Britain’s Type 45 destroyers is ready to take her place in the battle line.

This is a Sea Viper missile leaving its silo on HMS Diamond, accelerating to three times the speed of sound to intercept its target a couple of dozen miles off the Outer Hebrides.

Seconds later the missile did just that, knocking a jet drone out of the sky – thus confirming the main weapon system of the Portsmouth-based destroyer.

Sea Viper – a combination of Aster missiles, Sampson radar (the spinning spikey egg atop Diamond’s main mast), a combat and command system (the brains) and a silo on the forecastle containing the Sylver vertical launch system – can destroy a target the size of a cricket ball travelling at Mach 3.

With the words: ‘Standby for Sea Viper function’, one of the silo doors flipped open. Moments later the missile burst through the membrane covering its ‘home’, sending debris whirling around the forecastle, which was hidden by an instantaneous flash of fire and smoke as the missile accelerated to its target.

*Bird away.*

In this case, Diamond’s prey was a Mirach drone – a 13ft remote-controlled jet which flies at speeds of up to 530kts (more than 600mph) from altitudes as low as 10ft or as high as 40,000ft for up to 90 minutes.

The successful Sea Viper firing is the culmination of a busy year for Diamond. She was accepted into the Navy under 11 months ago and is due to deploy in a matter of weeks – making her the fastest frigate or destroyer in recent memory to go from ‘joining up’ to deploying.

Along the way the ship’s company have worked tirelessly to meet all the strict training requirements as well as making sure the ship remains at the highest state of maintenance.

That training was largely delivered by staff from the Flag Officer Sea Training organisation in Plymouth. They tested Diamond in everything she is expected to encounter from skirmishes with fast attack craft to high-intensity conflict as part of a task group against sustained air, surface and submarine attacks simulated by real jets, ships and submarines.

The ship’s company proved they could deal with these evolutions, as well as fighting fires and floods at the same time. But warfighting is not the only task a modern and versatile ship like Diamond may be called upon to undertake, so she

was assessed on how she dealt with humanitarian operations like disaster relief and civilian evacuations.

Her training concluded last week taking part in the biggest military exercise in Europe this year, Joint Warrior.

Diamond joined ships from six different nations, as well as land and air units operating in and around western Scotland, as part of a fictional task group conducting peacekeeping operations in an unstable and volatile environment.

As well as final preparations for her deployment later this spring, given the ship’s name she’ll be playing an important role in the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

“I am immensely proud of what my ship’s company has accomplished in such a short space of time,” said Diamond’s Commanding Officer Cdr Ian Clarke.

“Ever since I took command of this ship in 2010 my focus has been to see her declared ready for operations within this time scale.

“Our job when we deploy will be to bring stability and security to international trade routes and protecting our nation’s interests abroad; a job we are now trained and ready to do.”

Picture: LA(Phot) Ben Sutton, FRPU North

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE  
CHANCERY DIVISION  
COMPANIES COURT

No. 3238 of 2012

IN THE MATTER OF  
AMERICAN LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY

- and -

METLIFE LIMITED, METLIFE ASSURANCE LIMITED AND  
METLIFE EUROPE LIMITED

- and -

IN THE MATTER OF  
PART VII OF THE FINANCIAL SERVICES AND MARKETS ACT 2000

## NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on 23 April 2012 American Life Insurance Company (“**Alico**”) and various other entities within the MetLife group namely MetLife Limited, MetLife Assurance Limited and MetLife Europe Limited (together, the “**MetLife Receiving Entities**”) made an application (the “**Application**”) to the High Court of Justice pursuant to section 107(1) of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 (the “**FSMA**”) for an Order:

(1) under section 111 of FSMA sanctioning an insurance business transfer scheme for the transfer of certain insurance business from the UK branch of Alico to the MetLife Receiving Entities (the “**Scheme**”); and

(2) making ancillary provisions in connection with the Scheme pursuant to section 112 of FSMA.

Copies of a report on the terms of the Scheme prepared pursuant to section 109 of FSMA (the “**Independent Expert’s Report**”) and a statement setting out the terms of the Scheme and containing a summary of the Independent Expert’s Report are available free of charge on Alico’s website at [www.alico.co.uk](http://www.alico.co.uk) and MetLife’s UK website at [www.metlife.co.uk](http://www.metlife.co.uk). Supporting documents and any further news about the Scheme will be posted on these websites so you may wish to check for updates.

You can also request free copies of any of these documents by contacting Alico using the details set out below.

The Application will be heard on 24 July 2012 by the Companies Court Judge at the Rolls Building, Royal Courts of Justice, 7 Rolls Buildings, Fetter Lane, London, EC4A 1NL. If approved by the Court, it is currently proposed that the transfer will take effect on 1 September 2012.

Any person who believes that he or she would be adversely affected by the carrying out of the Scheme is entitled to either make written representations or be heard (either in person or by a legal representative) at the hearing of the application on 24 July 2012. Any person who intends to appear at the Court or make representations in writing is requested to notify his or her objections as soon as possible and by no later than 20 July 2012 to the address set out below.

American Life Insurance Company  
Alico Transfer Team, PO Box 2037, Croydon CR90 9JR  
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# Hamburgers greet Ocean

YOU wait all year for a warship flying the White Ensign to turn up... and then two appear in a week.

Barely had the waters of the Elbe calmed after being stirred up by HMS St Albans (*see page 15*), than Britain's biggest warship also sailed into Hamburg.

On the back of a high-profile ten-day visit to London (*see page 14*), HMS Ocean made a bee-line for Germany's biggest and most famous port for a three-day stop.

The Mighty O berthed at the Überseebücke right in the heart of Hamburg's old port – less than a mile from the city centre and distractions of the Reeperbahn.

As well as a number of tours for locally-based military personnel including international officers at the Defence Staff College, some 7,000 Hamburgers looked around the ship during the two days she was open to visitors.

The helicopter carrier also hosted a capability demonstration which ended with the 250 guests witnessing a traditional Ceremonial Sunset where the salute was taken by Andrew Noble, Deputy Head of Mission at the British Embassy in Berlin.

Away from the ship, Ocean's padre, the Rev Jon Backhouse, led a small party in a wreath laying ceremony at the city's Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery.

As ever with such places, the area has been superbly looked after and is a place of tranquillity allowing the attendees to reflect upon the ultimate sacrifice made during the last war by personnel from all three Services who lay there.

A traditional German welcome was also extended by Hamburg's burghers with some 35 members of the ship's company accompanying Commanding Officer Capt Andrew Betton to a reception hosted by the regional government at the city's impressive Rathaus.

# Express train(ing)

SHE may be heading to the South Atlantic ultimately, but HMS Dauntless has already made her mark off West Africa.

And many of her ship's company have added a few French phrases after playing host to West African sailors and marines during Exercise Saharan Express.

Dauntless – on her first deployment – was boarded by Gambian, Senegalese and Moroccan personnel as they sought to beef up security at sea.

Eleven nations took part, some in the Atlantic off Senegal, others off Mauritania and the Gambia. All were there to tackle the growing threats in the region of people trafficking, piracy, drug smuggling and illegal fishing.

British boarding officers watched as Dauntless was briefly re-cast as a fishing vessel carrying anything from drugs to weapons of mass destruction.

Lt Simon Mendy, 38, from the Gambian Navy, led his boarding team around the quarterdeck and futuristic bridge of the 8,000-tonne ship.

Lt Mendy, from Gambia's capital Banjul, said: "We've really learned from visiting Dauntless and carrying out boarding work."

"The ship's crew have been very helpful; this is a rare chance for us to see a warship of this size."

The Type 45 destroyer, which is on her Auriga 12 deployment, was praised by other visiting officers.

French Lieutenant Guillaume Eudeline, 36, visiting from the helicopter carrier Tonnerre (meaning 'thunder'), said: "It has been a great experience seeing this ship and the technology it has – the radar is very impressive."

"I believe that French and British navies will work together increasingly closely in the future, which can only be a good thing for both of us."

Dauntless was the most modern ship at Saharan Express, dwarfing the patrol vessels used by West African nations to tackle crime off their shores.

She is the size of a cruiser rather than a destroyer, but can still reach up to 30 knots from a standing start in four times her length.

She (and her sisters) are the first entirely electric-propulsion warships in the world, a design which aims to make her 45 per cent more efficient than predecessors.

Captain Will Warrender, Dauntless' CO, said the exercise had shown the versatility of 45s.

He said: "We have here a tremendously powerful warship but also one that can fulfil a range of tasks."

"This exercise is exactly what Auriga 12 is about; we are meeting other navies, working with them to improve their capacity to work effectively, and at the same time continuing to learn more about what this class of ship can do."

From Dauntless' captain down to her newest arrival, AB Ryan Skipper, there is a learning curve.

AB Skipper, 18, from Gosport, is finding his way around the ship after just a few weeks onboard.

He said: "For the first few days you don't really know where you're going but it has improved, and people have been nice and helpful."

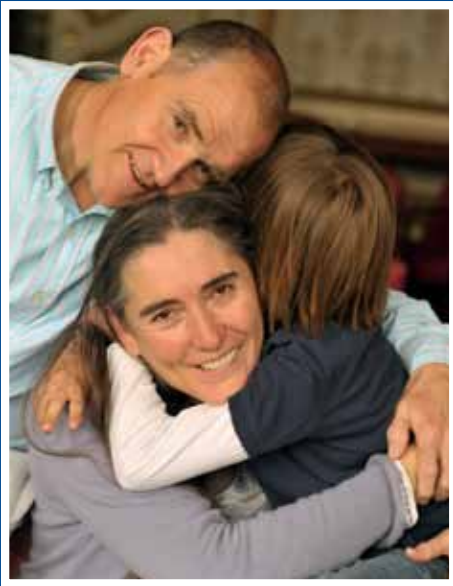
"I keep getting people explaining to me that there is a lot more space on this ship than the older ones and I've visited a Type 23 frigate, so I feel pretty lucky to be here."

Capt Warrender added: "I am extremely proud to be in command of this ship. There are real responsibilities because it is a new ship and we are always learning about the class."

"Essentially these destroyers give huge choice to military and political leaders and that gives the Navy the ability to influence events at sea and land and in the air."

● Moroccan marines scramble up Dauntless' rope ladder during a boarding exercise

Picture: LA(Phot) Nicky Wilson, HMS Dauntless



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An unusual 'ferry' ride to Luce Bay!



The locals kindly gave us a ride to Stranraer



The mayor of Durham met us at the station



Getting our instructions from the boss

# Challenge Bulwark

SIX sailors and marines from the nation's flagship completed a 550-mile odyssey from south-west Scotland to London and finally back to their ship in Weymouth with just the gift of the gab and their uniforms to help them on their way.

With just five minutes notice for the challenge, the men and women from HMS Bulwark were summoned to the assault ship's bridge, told they would be dumped ashore near Stranraer and would have to use their initiative to rejoin the warship a few days later in time for Olympic security training off the Dorset coast.

With the ship in Luce Bay completing her part in the biggest military exercise of the year, Marine engineer CPO Lou Lawson, aircraft handler LA Clare Callow, Royal Marine Cpl Richard 'Banjo' Lancaster, Wtr Michaela Tough and AB Paul 'Buck' Rogers rocked up and, as the event should be recorded for posterity, Bulwark's photographer LA Martin 'Chilli' Carney was asked to join them.

The previous 'mad challenge' set five Bulwarkers the task of getting from the tip of Scotland to Faslane sans money – and to appear in the media, tour a distillery, play the bagpipes and generally blag a lot.

This time the flagship's Commanding Officer Capt Alex Burton set the sextet the task of getting from Galloway to Weymouth to meet the ship for her Olympic security training exercise without the use of money.

*Simples.*

For added 'fun', the captain decided they must visit each Olympic aquatic venue including the Water Polo Arena, Eton-Dorney, Lee Valley White Water Centre and Weymouth and Portland.

To make it even more interesting the challengers had to meet the Bishop, council chairman and Mayor of Durham, visit Durham Trinity School and Trinity House London, plug the ship on a TV show, meet a living Olympian and, before rejoining the flagship, produce a suitable commemorative photograph for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

Anyway, back to Luce Bay...

Once ashore, the six decided the first stop, once they'd orientated themselves, should be the pub – to hatch a plan, obviously.

That plan involved hitching to Stranraer... and then heading for the pub for more plan hatching...

In Stranraer, CPO Lawson persuaded railway staff to give free tickets to Edinburgh, where the team tried (and failed) to get a free night's stay in a five-star hotel... but did stay in a hostel for £13.

Semi-refreshed, the next morning they blagged more free travel as far as Durham, where they were met off the train by the mayor. The city's bishop was away, but his dean obliged, as did the staff of Durham's Trinity School who sorted out free fish and chips and a free night in a luxury hotel.

Next stop London. Except the guard on the train south wasn't quite as accommodating as predecessors in Scotland and booted the challengers off in Northallerton.

Luckily staff on the next train to York didn't check tickets... and once in the historic city another train company was happy to provide free onward travel to the capital (and free cuppas all the way too).

Folk in the capital were just as helpful. CPO Lawson once again proved he had a silvery tongue and sorted out two free nights at the Union Jack Club.

In London, the team accomplished all their goals bar one (appearing on the telly). They did, however, trump the 'meet a living Olympian' by meeting a living Olympian... and Royal to boot when they attended an event at Trinity House with Princess Anne (she rode with the equestrian team at the 1976 games in Montreal).

A bit more blagging (and a few more trips to the pub) and the six were back aboard Bulwark off Weymouth in time for the ship's high-profile Olympic security exercise.

"The Navy often presents its personnel with challenging situations where wits and sharp thinking are key to resolving them. This one caught us all by surprise," said Chilli.

"It tested our mettle and resourcefulness to the max. At times, the stress of certain situations showed as patience wore thin and voices became raised.

"But that professionalism which is instilled within us from the early stages of basic training prevailed and our personal differences would be quickly forgotten as we worked hard together to deal with the job in hand."

Which is probably exactly what Capt Burton and his team want to hear.

"This type of challenge tests these young sailors and marines' initiative and resourcefulness whilst allowing them to apply their leadership and management training in an arena outside their normal sphere of operations," says Bulwark's Executive Officer Cdr Kevin Rowlands.

"The London 2012 motto is 'inspire a generation' and hopefully these sailors and marines will gain from their experience and inspire those that they lead."



Grabbing some zzzzz on the train to London...



A quick pose in front of Tower Bridge



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# Not any old Lion

WHAT we love about the Royal Marines is they're all action. Blowing stuff up, running ashore from landing craft, rifles at the ready, daggers drawn, cammed up, war faces on. Proper *Commando*, *Boy's Own* stuff.

Or having a rest in a forest.

Or getting your head down against your bergen in a meadow.

Or sitting down in a field at sunset.

Royal Marines of 45 Commando take a breather amid five otherwise gruelling days in South-west Scotland.

Fresh from taking part in the biggest war games in Europe this year, Joint Warrior, the Arbroath-based green berets were thrust immediately into Scottish Lion which saw the entire unit – more than 750 troops – put ashore south of Stranraer.

The exercise was the latest test for 45, who have now assumed the role of 'lead commando group' – which means they're at short notice to deploy around the world should the Government need to call on their services.

Scottish Lion roamed from the ranges of West Freugh in the west to the ruins of 16th-Century Edingham Castle, near Dalbeattie, more than 40 miles to the East.

After being based on helicopter carrier HMS *Illustrious*, flagship HMS *Bulwark* and amphibious support ship RFA *Mounts Bay* for Joint Warrior, the entire Commando was landed by helicopters and landing craft on to the sands at West Freugh, a former RAF base now used as a missile test site.

Having established themselves around the old airfield, the Royal Marines moved inland, bound for Kirkcudbright (pronounced cur-coo-bree), three dozen miles away, to attack various objectives, before establishing themselves one more time.

As well as testing the men in the front line, Scottish Lion was a vital test of all the rearward services crucial to any operation such as logistics, transportation and casualty treatment.

Transport was provided by Commando Helicopter Force Sea Kings and RAF Chinooks, while the Royals' vehicles clocked up more than 5,800 miles moving men and kit around the roads of Dumfries and Galloway.

The Regimental Aid Post was never far behind the action and every 'casualty' was evacuated to it within an average of 26 minutes from point of injury.

For added realism, more serious 'casualties' were even flown back to *Illustrious* for notional treatment within two hours of being 'wounded'.

With Kirkcudbright secured and 45 Commando established in the small town, it was time for the final assault on Edingham Castle with all four rifle companies and supporting echelons of the Commando.

With the dilapidated fortress seized, Scottish Lion was done, bringing the curtain down on 13 separate company-level operations, six helicopter assaults and a move over land by the Arbroath green berets of some 60 miles.

Major Richard Wallace, 45 Commando's Second-in-Command, said the exercise was the perfect work-out for the unit ahead of their front-line mission.

"Scottish Lion allowed 45 Commando to get back to the grass roots of what being a Royal Marine Commando entails," he added.

"We experienced the full spectrum of conflict during the exercise: from the delivery of humanitarian aid to night-time commando raids against an enemy dug into a fortified position. It has set the unit up for success and we have now taken on the role of the lead commando group."

pictures: la(phot) andy laidlaw, 45 cdo

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Picture: LA(Phot) Abbie Herron, RNAS Yeovilton

# '...Cheered all the way...'

STRIDING purposefully past the Palace of Westminster's iconic Clock Tower – popularly known as Big Ben – Cdr Colin Williams leads a contingent of 49 sailors through the nation's capital.

The Naval personnel – drawn from nine warships, submarines, squadrons and auxiliaries – formed two fifths of a parade of Servicemen and women invited to march through London and into Parliament for a reception honouring their deeds off and over Libya last year.

In all 16 Royal Navy units were involved in the crisis in North Africa – from the first days of the humanitarian evacuation involving HMS Cumberland and York at the beginning of 2011 to the fall of the last pro-government strongholds in the autumn.

Personnel enforced a UN arms embargo to the Gaddafi regime, choreographed the complex air campaign, kept the sea lanes open by clearing mines and hit at the belly of the beast with strikes from Tomahawk cruise missiles, Army

Apache gunships from HMS Ocean, and the main guns of HMS Sutherland, Iron Duke and especially Liverpool.

To mark their contributions to the campaign – codenamed Operation Ellamy – the All Party Parliamentary Group for the Armed Forces invited a representative sample of personnel to the seat of government.

Cdr Williams, who's just left HMS Liverpool now that she's decommissioned, was the platoon commander for the Naval contingent.

As well as his former shipmates, personnel from HM Ships Ocean, Triumph – the submarine which fired Britain's opening salvo in the conflict courtesy of her Tomahawks – Sutherland, Bangor, Brocklesby, 815 and 847 NAS and RFA Fort Rosalie took part in the parade.

They were joined by nine soldiers and 60 RAF air and ground crew, plus a Royal Air Force band.

The parade was followed by a

private reception in the Terrace Marquee overlooking the Thames where parliamentarians and senior military officers were able to talk with Service personnel and listen to their experiences.

"It was astonishing to see so many people out on the streets between Wellington Barracks and Westminster. We were cheered all the way. It was a very proud and enjoyable experience, one I will remember for a long time," said Lt Phil Barron of 815 NAS in Yeovilton – and Flight commander of HMS Liverpool's Lynx during the campaign.

The Ellamy veterans were hosted by James Gray MP, Chairman of the All Party Group for the Armed Forces.

"When troops march into Parliament for a welcome home, they are applauded in by parliamentarians and staff," he said. "Politics are put to one side, arguments forgotten, while we honour those who serve and are prepared to sacrifice for their nation."



# Pall of fame

WITH orange-red flames billowing up in a gigantic mushroom and black smoke drifting across the Indian Ocean, this is one of three pirate action groups whose nefarious activities were brought to a halt in a fortnight by HMS Westminster.

In each case, the Portsmouth-based warship pounced after the pirates had tried – but failed – to hijack merchant shipping in the Indian Ocean.

As the ship sprinted to the scene her Merlin was sent aloft; when they located the action groups, the helicopters crew invariably found the small craft crammed with weapons, extra fuel, ladders and more people than you would expect to find for any other purpose – hundreds of miles from land.

At the sight of the Merlin, with Royal Marines Commando snipers in the back, and 5,000 tonnes of armed-to-the-teeth battleship grey bearing down on them, the suspects began ditching their pirate paraphernalia over the side and into the depths of the Indian Ocean.

In the face of such overwhelming force, the suspects themselves immediately surrendered and Westminster's boarding team of Royal Marines and Royal Navy personnel secured them while evidence was gathered for the authorities in Combined Task Force 151, the international naval group to which the 'capital ship' is currently assigned.

With the 'bust' complete, the action groups' vessels were destroyed – boats, fuel, engines, communications kit, weaponry – by the guns of the Merlin, or the guns of Westminster herself, with suitably fiery results by day or night.

"They have nowhere to hide and, as the pictures show, we also have the hardware to really spoil their day!" said Lt Cdr Kay Burbidge, Senior Observer of 829 Naval Air Squadron who is currently embarked aboard Westminster with the ship's Merlin flight.

"With the Merlin's superior endurance and sophisticated sensors we can cover large areas of ocean to search for pirates and smugglers."

When not hunting pirates, Westminster has been hunting sharks. Big black sharks to be precise. Armed with torpedoes. And cruise missiles.

The Type 23 was the hunter, along with destroyer USS Sterett, Saudi corvettes HMS Hitteen and Badr, and PNS Badr – better known to many Brits as HMS Alacrity before she was sold to Pakistan two decades ago.

And the hunted? Enter boats USS Pittsburgh and HMS Triumph.

And thus was the cast assembled for Exercise Arabian Shark, an anti-submarine exercise played

out in the Arabian Sea.

For Westminster, roughly half-way through her east of Suez deployment, Arabian Shark was a chance for her to get back to her *raison d'être*.

The 'capital ship' and her 12 Type 23 frigate sisters were designed in the late 1980s to hunt Soviet submarines in the North Atlantic.

Since then the world has changed – as has the technology: Westminster has the best submarine-hunting helicopter in the world (an 829 Naval Air Squadron Merlin) and the world's best submarine-hunting sonar (2087).

So let the games begin as the hunter-killers tried to hunt and kill the warships... and the surface forces did likewise in search of the submarines.

The main aims of the exercise were to strengthen military relationships and improve war-fighting techniques of all the navies involved.

"Arabian Shark was a significant international exercise allowing for the strong bonds between the participating nations to be reinforced," said Lt Thom Hobbs, Westminster's Principal Warfare Officer (Underwater).

"We are working together to ensure security and stability at sea."

The exercise was hailed a resounding success with all of the units involved gaining valuable training with a variety of other nations' units in a strategically important area of the world.

With Arabian Shark concluded, Triumph and Pittsburgh made a rare appearance on the surface of a wonderfully-calm Arabian Sea for the ever-popular task group photograph.

All well and good. But what we really want to know is... how many litres of washing powder have the ship's company got through to keep their No.4s clean?

Well, thanks to the ever-efficient logistics department aboard, we can tell you that 520 litres were used in the first three months.

The sick bay got through more than a third of its supply of paracetamol and ibuprofen – its medics see around one quarter of the ship's company (207 souls – including nine Royal Marines and 36 women) each week for various ailments.

The jack dusties meanwhile tallied the value of accountable stores on board (and this doesn't include furnishings, computers and the like): a whopping £33,384,254.19 (that 19p is all important...).

And lest we forget the galley... Well, the chefs cook 2,800 kilos of spuds per month, 126kg of bacon, 167kg of sausages (just for breakfast).

All of which has been accompanied by more than 6,000 cups of tea per month.

How very British.



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pictures: et(we) katie shaw, hms westminster





# 30 years on, Veterans are still fighting for peace

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of June this year it will have been 30 years since the Falklands War ended. But for many Falklands Veterans, the battle still rages in their minds.

Combat Stress is the leading UK charity specialising in the care of Veterans' mental ill health. We are supporting over 200 Veterans who served in the Falklands War and who, 30 years on, are still suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, anxiety, paranoia or depression from what they endured in battle.

**We know there are hundreds more out there who need our help.**



## Darren's story

Darren Horsnell joined the 4th Field Regt, Royal Artillery at sixteen and was nineteen in 1982 when they were deployed to the Falklands. Here he bravely shares some of his experiences to explain why treatment is so vital.

'I saw the Argentinean jets coming down bomb alley and opening fire on our ships, dropping their bombs. A feeling of uselessness came over me. Our men were sitting targets. We were firing small arms at the airplanes and I remember screaming at them, "Leave them alone!" I still wake up screaming.

Later I was injured and evacuated to the field hospital. While they were operating on my right calf, I could see the body of a guy in the next bed who had had his back blown out. I used to dream about this guy and in the dream he'd turn around and start talking.

When I came home I didn't tell anybody that I was having nightmares, or flashbacks. But all that was sinking deeper and deeper into me, and obviously it was getting harder to hide. But I was in denial. It was everyone around me who had the problem, not me.

It was nearly 14 years before I got any help. My [then] wife forced me to go and see my GP, who told me about Combat Stress. They assessed me and diagnosed me with PTSD.

One day, the Activities Centre Manager said to me, "Why don't you try some art therapy?" When I was painting it took all the bad memories away. I am now teaching other Veterans to paint. It is a great form of therapy.

I also do Cognitive Behavioural Therapy at Combat Stress, once a month. And I am on a health management course too. I can honestly say Combat Stress saved my life. Without them I don't think I would be here today.

**There's nothing wrong about going to ask for help. Go and see somebody.'**

## HAVE YOU SERVED?

Whenever you served, whatever your age, it's never too late to get the help you need. Don't put it off.

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\*standard charges may apply for texts

**Visit [combatstress.org.uk](http://combatstress.org.uk) for more information**





# In Grob we trust

**H**IGH in clear-blue Lincolnshire skies, Grob trainers fly together as the Fleet Air Arm's pilots of tomorrow learn the art of flying in formation.

These are four of the 20 aircraft of 703 Naval Air Squadron, an outpost of the Fleet Air Arm in the RAF's heartland – and the place where naval pilots and observers learn the fundamentals of flight.

703 is co-located with 674 Squadron Army Air Corps at RAF Barkston Heath, a satellite airfield of RAF College Cranwell – the spiritual home of the Air Force.

It's 703's mission to deliver Elementary Flying Training (EFT) to Royal Navy and Royal Marines student pilots and, more recently, Elementary Navigation Training (ENT) to Royal Navy observer students using the Grob Tutor 115E.

At any one time, 15 of the squadron's 20 Grobs are serviceable... although there's only room on the dispersal for 12 – a problem most commanding officers of FAA squadrons would love to have.

It's a problem currently tackled by Lt Cdr Roger Wyness, one of four RN Qualified Flying Instructors (QFIs) assigned to 703.

Between them they have amassed a modest 12,000 hours front line experience on Harrier GR7s, Lynx, Sea King and Tornado F3s.

They also go through a six-month course with 115(R) Squadron RAF where they learn all about the Grob as well as the art of passing on their skill, knowledge and experience to rookie pilots.

In addition to the RN quartet, there are also three civilian instructors with a wealth of experience; one of the present team is a former professional aerobatics pilot whose log book entries include (*inter alia*) Spitfires, Mustangs and Corsairs.

Thoughts of such aircraft are a long way in the future for the student pilots, who begin their time at 703 with a month of ground school at Cranwell where, alongside their RAF and Army counterparts, the budding aviators study flight theory, aerodynamics, meteorology, navigation techniques and altimetry, as well as completing a

number of safety drills including how to use a parachute.

They then join the squadron at Barkston Heath where they begin the long road to the front line.

Initial piloting skills are honed with the aim of a first solo sortie incorporating the basics of learning how to safely handle the Grob during take-off, circuits and landing.

Advanced handling techniques are then followed by applied skills which include navigation, flying and operating solely with reference to the aircraft's instrumentation, low-level navigation techniques and how to fly in formation.

It takes approximately six months to complete the 55-flying-hour syllabus and culminates in the mildly-stressful Final Air Test.

Successful completion allows the students to move on to the next stage of training at RAF Shawbury for instruction on the Squirrel helicopter, or for the select few, to RAF Linton-on-Ouse for fixed-wing training.

June 20 sees the first anniversary of observer training in its current guise, split between Barkston Heath and RNAS Culdrose.

Under the badge of 703 NAS, observer students undergo a four-week programme of ground school following a similar syllabus to their pilot counterparts.

After ground school they complete nine general handling flights and ten visual navigation sorties.

If they successfully come through their time at Barkston Heath, the rookie observers decamp to RNAS Culdrose and 750 NAS where their tactical observer skills are developed with the aid of the newest aircraft in the Royal Navy's inventory, the King Air Avenger.

703 runs six courses a year for each specialisation with the capacity to train 60 student pilots and 36 observers when running at full capacity.

In the past 12 months the Senior Service element at RAF Barkston Heath has notched up 1,600 sorties having trained 14 pilots and nine observers (the relatively low numbers are the result of the 2010 defence review).

Although flying training is the squadron's principal mission,

staff also have a duty to maintain and develop military ethos amongst what are essentially Royal Navy officers undergoing Phase 2 training. Visits to the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight and flights with some of the Air Force's squadrons based at RAF Waddington go some way towards achieving this.

But being a small speck of dark blue in a sea of RAF light blue it's also important to foster the Senior Service identity.

Use of correct naval terminology (shareholders, heads, gopher, shipmate and so on) is rigorously enforced by the squadron's Executive Officer, Lt Jamie Haggio.

Personnel also take part in major RN events, such as the ski championships, but it's the most important date in naval aviation – Taranto Night – which is always commemorated.

Each November, the RAF's President of the Mess kindly hands over Daedalus Officers' Mess – Cranwell started life

as RNAS Daedalus, hence the lighthouse on top of the college, miles from the sea – to the Senior Naval Officer, currently Cdr Andy Riggall.

Of course, appreciation of the wider joint Service identity is hugely encouraged at every opportunity with regular attendance at the CO's Cup where the 703 NAS competes against the other Squadrons and host units at RAF College Cranwell.

Activities away from the squadron also keep the team busy throughout the year.

Liaison with both Northumberland and Wales University Royal Naval Units passes on the Fleet Air Arm

'word' to potential aviators of the future through mutual visits and social events.

Representation during the annual November ceremonies is also recognised as vitally important, with students and staff taking part at commemorations across the county.

So, in the depths of 'RAF Lincolnshire', far from the sea

**Motto:** *Experientia docet* – experience teaches  
**Aircraft:** Grob Aircraft Grob 115E  
**Engines:** 1 x Lycoming O-360 A1B6 piston engine  
**Wing Span:** 10m (32ft 8in)  
**Length:** 7.54m (24ft 9in)  
**Ceiling:** 3,050m (10,000ft)  
**Speed:** 185kt  
**Endurance:** 620 nautical miles  
**Crew:** one pilot; one student

**Facts and figures**

## PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORIES



OUR trip down memory lane courtesy of the immense photographic archives of the Imperial War Museum this month appropriately takes us back to June 1953 and the Coronation of Elizabeth II.

On the left (A 032568), the ship's company of Britain's last battleship, HMS Vanguard, paint her sides ahead of the Coronation Review at Spithead...

...and on the right (KOR 000049), Rear Admiral Eric Clifford – Flag Officer Second in Command for the Far East Station – raises his cap and calls for three cheers for the Queen during a Coronation Day parade aboard HMS Ocean – 6,000 miles away in Sasebo, Japan.

The carrier had just completed the first patrol of her second tour of duty off Korea after relieving HMS Glory.

And although the Coronation was a Commonwealth affair, it was celebrated by all ships in the Japanese harbour – Dutch, American, British – who dressed overall for the occasion.

Ocean had already staged a flypast of her Sea Furies two days earlier, forming 'E R' over the carrier.

On the big day itself Ocean was the focal point of commemorations with a service and parade held onboard (although a cloudburst meant it was shifted from the flight deck to her hangar).

After the cheers, the beers – well, rum, for 'splice the mainbrace' was ordered; a treat extended to the Chinese stewards thanks to lobbying by Ocean's captain.

The day closed with a searchlight display by all the ships in harbour, enjoyed by all the assorted ship's companies, plus some 200 VIPs.

That wasn't quite the end of celebrations, for the next day marquees with bars were opened ashore in Sasebo for all United Nations forces, all provided by local business leaders.

■ THESE photographs – and 9,999,999 others from a century of war and peace – can be viewed or purchased at [www.iwmcollections.org.uk](http://www.iwmcollections.org.uk), by emailing [photos@IWM.org.uk](mailto:photos@IWM.org.uk), or by phoning 0207 416 5333.





# Ten tors of duty for air team



● A Lynx Mk8 helicopter (foreground) from 815 NAS and a Sea King Mk4 from 848 NAS in support of the 2012 Ten Tors challenge

Picture: PO(Phot) Mez Merrill (CHF)

HERE'S a rare and reassuring sight on Dartmoor.

No, not the Commando Helicopter Force Sea King and Royal Navy Lynx turning and burning – but dry ground and a distinct lack of precipitation in the air.

Because clear blue skies over one of the wettest places in England during the annual Ten Tors adventurous training weekend for more than 2,000 young people does not seem to happen too often.

The Ten Tors sees schools, colleges, Scouts, Guides and cadet units from the three Forces converge on Devon for a two-day trek, navigating their way around the crags, rocks and tors which pepper this often forbidding environment.

The event is supported each year by helicopters from RN Air Station Yeovilton in Somerset, who use it as an excellent training weekend for a myriad of duties, from ferrying passengers to shifting loads and evacuating casualties.

And it is typically cursed by horrendous weather – Dartmoor endures more than two metres (78in) of rain each year.

In fact, this year looked like following the standard pattern.

Just two days before the start, torrential rain and rivers in flood made the postponement of the 52nd event a distinct possibility.

As it was, the gods smiled on the 2,400 participants from 400 teams, as they strove to be the first to pass through ten of the 19 manned checkpoints on tors across the moor.

Camping overnight, teams of young people aged between 13 and 17 must navigate their way across the highest peaks, tackling routes of 35, 45 or 55 miles.

Before they departed, all were inspected to ensure they had the

necessary safety equipment.

Yeovilton provided a Lynx Mk8 from 815 Naval Air Squadron and two Sea King Junglie aircraft from 848 Naval Air Squadron – including one painted in the force's famous green and white stripes.

Over the busy weekend the helicopters lifted more than 50 underslung loads to the tors, resupplying items from jerrycans of water and rations to radio equipment and safety stores.

The helicopters also lifted more than 500 people to remote outcrops on the moor, reaching the most inaccessible corners, many miles from roads or the rough tracks which criss-cross the landscape.

There were also more than 40 minor casualties airlifted off the moor, either back to the base camp at Okehampton or straight to Derriford Hospital in Plymouth.

All the casualties left hospital in short order and returned with their starting teams.

"We train and fly over Dartmoor quite a lot, and it can produce some really awful weather," said Cdr Richard Sutton, 848 Squadron's Commanding Officer and one of the pilots for Ten Tors 2012.

"Ten Tors gives us an ideal chance to train with real people in real situations."

Brig Piers Hankinson, Commanding Officer of 43 Wessex Brigade, who runs the event, said: "It is tough for them [the participants]."

"The routes are arduous and they have to carry everything they will need with them."

"To complete Ten Tors takes considerable determination and commitment."

And it helps when you are not knee-deep in cold water for much of the time...



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# London 2012 calling

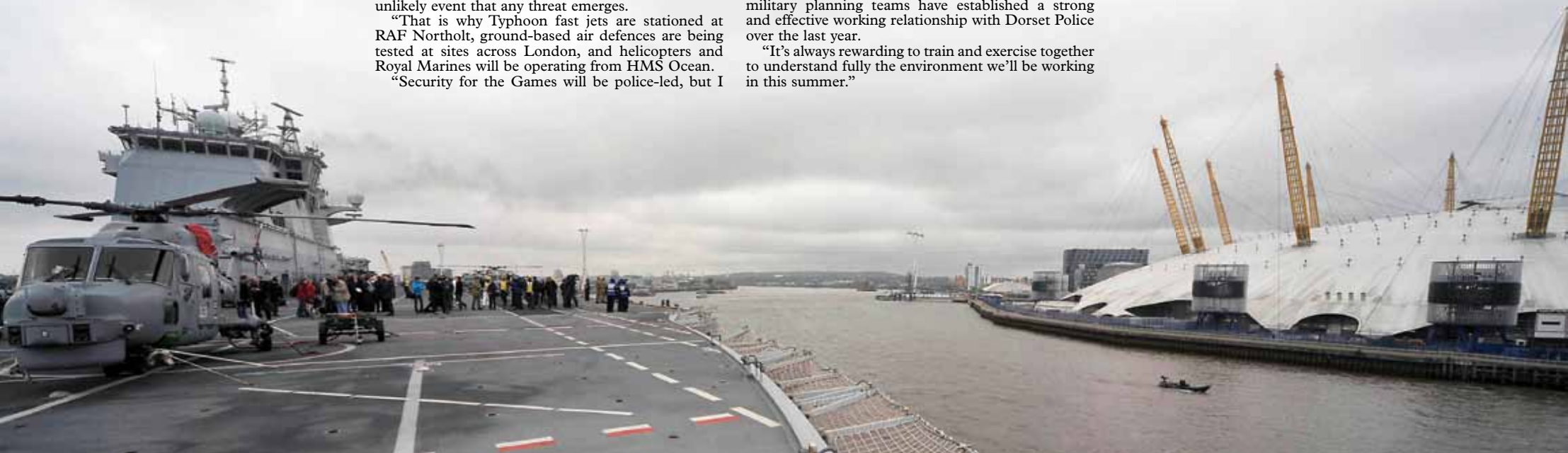


● A Mk8 Lynx helicopter, carrying Defence Secretary Philip Hammond, takes off from the flightdeck of HMS Ocean against the backdrop of Canary Wharf  
Credit: LA(Phot) Guy Pool



● One of Bulwark's landing craft with HMS Raider and RIBs exercise off Dorset  
Credit: LA(Phot) Martin Carney

● HMS Ocean passes the O2 Arena on her way to Greenwich  
Credit: LA(Phot) Guy Pool



**“TOGETHER we will deliver a safe and secure Games in the region – it’s going to be a spectacular show,” said Capt Alex Burton.**

The commanding officer of HMS Bulwark is one of many Naval personnel gearing up for this year’s Olympics and Paralympics – and the Royal Navy is playing its part in ensuring that the London 2012 Olympics are as safe, secure and smooth-running as possible.

The largest ship in the Royal Navy’s surface fleet HMS Ocean headed into the heart of London in early May to take part in a major exercise, putting military and civilian authorities through their paces in the build-up to the summer Games.

During the exercise, the helicopter carrier was moored at Greenwich, where she was the maritime hub for police-led operations.

Over the course of nine days, Exercise Olympic Guardian brought together the men and women of the military and civil authorities.

In addition to the four Royal Navy grey Lynx helicopters on board, Ocean played host to four Army Air Corps Mk 7 Lynx (although this type of Lynx is not unfamiliar to the men and women on board from its service with the Navy’s Commando Helicopter Force 847 Naval Air Squadron).

The Naval helicopters’ role was bolstered by the presence of Royal Marines snipers from 539 Assault Squadron and 43 Commando whose task is to shoot out the engines of any suspicious vessels on the nation’s waterways.

The same Marines units were also on boats patrolling the Thames, alongside the more overt grey presence of the Navy’s P2000 patrol boats.

The arrival of HMS Ocean in Greenwich was the last piece of the puzzle of a suite of security assets preparing for the big sporting event.

Defence Secretary Philip Hammond visited the helicopter carrier in Greenwich, saying: “The public will expect that we are ready and prepared in the unlikely event that any threat emerges.

“That is why Typhoon fast jets are stationed at RAF Northolt, ground-based air defences are being tested at sites across London, and helicopters and Royal Marines will be operating from HMS Ocean.

“Security for the Games will be police-led, but I

am proud to see the military taking a key role in the security arrangements around the world’s greatest sporting event which will be watched by billions worldwide.”

However it wasn’t all Olympics for the ship and her company on their visit to the nation’s capital. Despite the cold grey skies and customary Bank Holiday drizzle, the ship played host to almost four thousand visitors who took the short boat ride to explore onboard.

Cdr Jon Asbridge, Ocean’s Commander Logistics, said: “It was fantastic – the number of people who visited the ship – and we were proud to be able to show off the Royal Navy’s largest warship to London.

“Despite the poor Bank Holiday weather we have had over 3,500 visitors and everybody I spoke to really enjoyed the visit.”

Of course, despite the name, it is not just London that is gearing up for the Olympics this summer.

Fleet flagship HMS Bulwark was at the centre of Olympic Guardian’s preparations off Dorset, where she was the civil authorities’ tactical maritime command and control headquarters at sea.

The waters off Dorset provide the sailing venues of Weymouth Bay and Portland Harbour – and the May exercise saw some 600 military and 80 civilian personnel trained over the course of the week at sea.

Dorset Police Authority was bolstered by 26 other Police constabularies, alongside teams from the Maritime Coastguard Agency, RNLI, regional authorities, and members of the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Naval expertise was supplied by the men and women of HMS Bulwark, Royal Marines from 4 Assault Squadron RM, 43 Commando, the Merlins of 814 NAS, P2000s from the First Patrol Boat Squadron, boats from 10 Training Squadron Royal Marines and the explosive ordnance disposal teams of the Southern Diving Unit.

Bulwark’s CO Capt Alex Burton added: “Our military planning teams have established a strong and effective working relationship with Dorset Police over the last year.

“It’s always rewarding to train and exercise together to understand fully the environment we’ll be working in this summer.”



● (Above) A Dorset police officer working in the hub of Bulwark’s ops room during the exercise  
Credit: LA(Phot) Guy Pool



# Reverence and celebration

FROM a sombre ceremony in a chilly fjord to a massive party in one of the world's great harbours, HMS St Albans has been honouring wartime sacrifice and celebrating more than eight centuries of history.

The frigate spent five days in Iceland to pay respects to those who fought and died on wartime convoys, and to forge links with the land of fire and ice.

The ship's CO, Cdr Tom Sharpe, and Britain's Ambassador to Iceland Ian Whitting cast a wreath into Hvalfjörður – once a vital staging in the Arctic Convoys to the Soviet Union.

Seventy years ago last month, the lifeline to the USSR delivering food, ammunition, trucks, tanks and other supplies aiding the Soviet war effort against the Third Reich, entered a critical phase.

In May 1942, the 35 merchant ships of convoy PQ16 mustered in these same waters.

Despite a huge escorting force of British and American battleships, carriers, cruisers and destroyers, only 25 would safely reach their destinations of Murmansk and Archangelsk, having run the gauntlet of U-boats and Luftwaffe bombers off northern Norway.

Eight ships were sunk, two more were damaged – an acceptable outcome in 1942.

Seven decades later and the Portsmouth-based frigate sailed from Reykjavik with international dignitaries, British Embassy staff and Icelandic media, in company with the Coast Guard patrol vessel Thor for a service of commemoration in the fjord, ten miles north of the island's capital.

The ship's company mustered on the frigate's flight deck for a service of remembrance, before a wreath was dropped into the chilly waters in memory of all those who served on the most challenging

of all convoy routes in World War 2 – between 1941 and 1945, more than 100 merchant and warships were lost carrying aid to the Soviet Union, although nearly four millions tons of supplies were safely delivered, a quarter of all the material supplied by the Western Powers to the USSR throughout the war.

As well as ceremonies in Hvalfjörður, St Albans took the rare chance to exercise with the Icelandic Coast Guard, practising officer of the watch manoeuvres with Thor, as well as a winching exercise with the Saint's Merlin.

These days RN visits to Iceland are few and far between, so St Albans made the most of her rare opportunity to see the land of fire and ice – and allow locals to see a cutting-edge British warship; several hundred Icelanders climbed aboard to meet the crew and tour the upper deck.

The Saint also hosted an official reception and capability demonstration for more than 60 foreign dignitaries and British Embassy staff.

Away from the ship, which was berthed just over a mile from the heart of Reykjavik, many sailors visited the hot springs at the Blue Lagoon and went on the Golden Circle tour which included Thingvellir national park, the Geysir and Strokkur geysers, and the Gullfoss waterfalls.

From Iceland the Portsmouth-based warship headed for the bright lights of Hamburg and the mother of all harbour festivals.

The Saint visited the great Hanseatic port to help strengthen international relations and also to help Germany celebrate the 823rd anniversary of Hamburg harbour – a birthday marked each year by a river festival.

During the long passage down the Elbe river, she took part in the Teufelsbrück Parade where she



● HMS St Albans conducts a steam-past with Icelandic Coast Guard flagship, the offshore patrol ship Þór (Thor), after leaving harbour at Reykjavik in Iceland bound for Hamburg  
Picture: LA(Phot) Abbie Herron

lined up as ship number 49 out of 91 visiting vessels.

For the *Hafengeburtstag* ('harbour birthday') festival, she was accompanied by a host of international warships, including the new Indian frigate Teg, on her maiden voyage, a French ocean tug and two Danish patrol boats.

The *Deutsche Marine* was represented by the submarine U34, fast patrol boat Zobel, minesweeper Pegnitz and the frigate Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.

An estimated 1.5 million people flocked to the banks of the Elbe for the three-day festival.

The ship's company were involved in many events, including official receptions on the German and Indian frigates, international shooting and football competitions and visits to the maritime museum and Thyssen Krupp shipyard.

And St Albans hosted a number of visits and enjoyed pride of place beneath a spectacular fireworks display on Saturday night.

The frigate's football team played a five-a-side tournament against teams from Russia, France, India, Poland and Germany.

The matches were very competitive and resulted in St Albans winning the tournament with a penalty shoot-out against the Germans (Champions League winners Chelsea were obviously taking note...).

AB(Sea) John Bayne said: "Both St Albans' teams were highly-impressed by how organised and

well-run the tournament had been and would like to say thank you to the organisers and all teams who participated.

"It was a hugely enjoyable day and one we would definitely look forward to again in the future."

The frigate's shooting team were equally successful, taking sixth, fourth, second and first places against international opposition which included French, Russian, Norwegian and German competitors.

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VICTORY SERVICES CLUB





## Diamonds all the way for Brian

THIS is CPO Brian Diamond. Aboard HMS Diamond. Proudly displaying his Diamond Jubilee medal.

The 30-year-old marine engineer was one of 12 members of the ship's company aboard the new £1bn destroyer who received their commemorative medals from Commanding Officer Cdr Ian Clarke to mark their Naval service in the 60th year of Elizabeth II's reign.

"When I joined HMS Diamond – my namesake ship – it raised a few eyebrows," said Brian, who helps maintain the hi-tech destroyer's sophisticated propulsion systems.

"But now to receive a Diamond Jubilee medal in addition to that I feel really proud – this is a special time for the whole nation."

CPO Diamond, from Portrush, joined the Navy 13 years ago and has been with the ship since it was handed to the Navy from builder BAE Systems in 2010.

He will be among the 190 crew for the ship's maiden operational deployment to the Gulf.

The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal is being awarded to all qualifying Forces personnel with at least five years' service to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Queen's accession to the throne.

## Big day out

YEOVILTON Air Day takes its theme this year from the 30th anniversary of the Falklands campaign.

The Royal Navy's premier air show, on Saturday June 23, promises plenty of interest on the ground as well as a thrilling air display.

Among the aircraft flying will be Navy helicopters and the fabled Swordfish, while the Red Arrows and an Avro Vulcan are also pencilled in to appear.

For details, see [www.royalnavy.mod.uk/The-Fleet-Air-Stations/RNAS-Yeovilton-Air-Day-2012](http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/The-Fleet-Air-Stations/RNAS-Yeovilton-Air-Day-2012)

# Fighting Lynx goes to museum

A ROYAL Navy helicopter which was shot-up in the Falklands and sank or crippled five Iraqi ships in 1991 has been restored and handed over to the Fleet Air Arm Museum in Yeovilton.

Flying from HMS Alacrity, Lynx XZ720 was hit by machine-gun fire in 1982 – pilot Lt Rob Sleeman only avoided a bullet which came through the windscreen because he had turned his head.

The aircraft went on to fly from HM ships Coventry, Brazen and Battleaxe, and as 216 Flight joined HMS Gloucester in July 1990.

Within a year she had her five 'kills' in the Gulf, using Sea Skua missiles, and evaded a missile aimed at her.

She continued in front-line service until 2009, mostly flying from Type destroyers including HM ships Edinburgh, York and

Manchester.

When she was gifted to the museum, serviceable parts were removed for the use of serving Lynx, and the helicopter restored to her 1991 Gulf War appearance, a task carried out by the Lynx Operational Support Team.

Yeovilton's CO, Cdre Paul Chivers – himself a Lynx Observer – accepted the helicopter on behalf of the museum, of which he is a trustee.

# Submariners recall Falklands patrols

A RETROSPECTIVE on British submarines in the Falklands Conflict was officially opened with an historic ceremony and a nod to the future of the Silent Service.

The RN Submarine Museum in Gosport has created an exhibition featuring personal memories of submariners who served in the South Atlantic three decades ago.

*Falklands 30 – War Patrols* was officially opened by museum chairman Vice Admiral Sir Tim McClement, 30 years to the day after the submarine in which he was second-in-command, HMS Conqueror, sank the Argentinian cruiser General Belgrano.

The veteran cruiser and her escorts was one element of a developing pincer movement by the Argentinian navy which British commanders saw as a deadly threat to the RN task group.

Before a brief description of the sinking, in which more than 320 Argentinian sailors died, Vice Admiral McClement presented the prized Dolphins badge – the international emblem of the submarine fraternity – to LSA David Slater of HMS Trenchant.

LSA Slater recently transferred from the Surface Fleet – or went from being a 'skimmer' to a 'deep' in Jackspeck – and his Executive Officer, Lt Cdr Jeff Fillimore, explained the process whereby a sailor must learn the submarine and its systems inside out before he can "join a very exclusive club".

The junior rate received his Dolphins in a glass of rum – the rum must be drained in one go and the badge caught between the teeth.

A number of veterans from the Conflict were also at the museum to see their contributions in the exhibition, which was put together

by photographic archivist Debbie Corner under the direction of museum curator Bob Mealings.

Among the memories shared are the hurried arrangements to sail south (by Lynne McClement, wife of the Vice Admiral, who recalled one man didn't turn up as he thought his mates were playing an April Fool trick on him), and the curse of excess rice pudding – that recollection from AB Mark Lister on board HMS Spartan, who now commands Trident missile submarine HMS Vigilant.

Others at the opening who contributed included Lt Cdr Frank Muscroft, former Marine Engineer Officer on board diesel boat HMS Onyx, which sank the burnt-out shell of RFA Sir

Galahad as a war grave.

Lt Cdr Muscroft said they knew that the bodies of many Welsh Guards were still on board the auxiliary, struck by bombs at Fitzroy on June 8 1982, and when their torpedo struck, and they could hear the ship break up and sink, there was a profound silence throughout the submarine.

His shipmate Brandon Hannon, who in 1982 was a 19-year-old Radio Operator, said the boat only surfaced at night, and respite came with the occasional chance to raft up alongside a ship.

"Looking back, you are honoured to have served your country," said Brandon, who now works in the offshore industry.

"I was quite young, and probably

didn't take it all in, but looking back, it was a privilege, really."

The other submarines involved in the conflict were Splendid, Courageous and Valiant.

*Falklands 30 – War Patrols*, which is included in the normal admission prices, runs until November 4.

A Falklands-related talk will be staged as part of the Third Thursday series in aid of the Saving HMS Alliance Appeal.

On June 21 former museum director Cdr Jeff Tall, will consider 'The Falklands War – a close run thing'.

The talk starts at 7pm and tickets cost £8 (£7 for Friends of the Museum and Submariners Association members).



● Phil Roberts applies the finishing touches to the Jubilee cake

Picture: Sgt Russ Nolan (RLC)

## No cakewalk for ex-Royals

TWO ex-Royal Marines chefs were reunited as they helped to craft a magnificent cake for the Queen on behalf of the Forces to mark her Diamond Jubilee.

Green berets Phil Roberts, who trains Navy chefs at HMS Raleigh, and Alan Starling, who does the same for Army cooks, were part of a team of caterers who spent 500 hours producing the 70kg masterpiece.

The RN instructor was one of several chefs who converged on the Defence Food Services School at Worthy Down to produce the cake, which reflected the themes of the Silver, Gold and Diamond Jubilees as well as the contributions of all three Services.

While the Army made the actual cake, Phil gave the creation seven coats of royal icing and painstakingly made and hand-painted most of the plaques decorating the top two tiers.

The cake is finished off with a replica of St Edward's

Crown, worn by the Queen at her coronation. All parts of the cake are edible.

While working on the cake Phil was reunited with Alan Starling, an oppo from his days as a Royal, who now fulfils a similar role training Army chefs.

Phil said: "It was great working with Alan again. He painted the pictures of the Royal residences which are on the bottom of the cake and they are amazing."

"I was chuffed to bits to be asked to be involved. It really is the crowning moment of my career."

Phil left the Corps in 1996 after 24 years, and joined Raleigh as a civilian instructor in 2002.

Now retired from competitive cooking, he won 53 medals during his career as a chef, including 25 golds.

The cake was formally presented to the Queen at a reception following the Armed Forces parade and muster at Windsor, as reported on pages 2-3.

# Black Cats on the loose

THE programme has been finalised, the dates are inked into the diary – the Black Cats are ready to wow the crowds at shows around the country this summer.

Rear Admiral Tom Cunningham, Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Aviation & Carriers), visited the Black Cats' home at RN Air Station Yeovilton to watch the two Lynx helicopters pirouette in sunny but windy Somerset skies.

The duo, drawn from 702 Naval Air Squadron which trains Lynx air and ground crew for front-line duties with the Navy, have been a popular sight for the past decade or so at air shows around the UK.

Originally known as 'The Lynx Pair', they were renamed the Black Cats after the fierce wildcat on the squadron's badge – and the naval slang term 'black catting', implying one-upmanship, having done or owned something better than anyone else.

The team is formed entirely of volunteers with Lt David Fleming lead pilot this year and Lt Ian Brannighan at the controls of 'Black 2'.

Between them they synchronise the helicopters' movements to give the effect of what has been described as an 'aerial ballet', conducting thrilling close passes and exciting dynamic helicopter formation flying.

They are supported by a team of engineers who roll up to shows around the country with their trailer, selling merchandise and, more importantly, selling the story of the Royal Navy and Fleet Air Arm.

"I hope that this year's display looks as good from the ground as it does from the aircraft," said Lt Fleming.

"It is full of dynamic manoeuvres, close formation and dramatic fast-passes."

"It is a challenging display for us to fly, but it will definitely be one to be seen from the crowd

at this year's air shows."

With the admiral's tick in the box secured, the Black Cats are validated to perform, their first appearance being at the Southend Air Show as *Navy News* went to press.

The full display season for the Black Cats is:

- June 8: Dawlish Air Show
- June 18: Cosford Air Show
- June 23: RNAS Yeovilton Air Day
- June 30/July 1: RAF Waddington International Air Show
- July 21-22: Sunderland International Air Show
- August 1: Weymouth Bay Festival
- August 25-26: Chris Evans' C4RF35T
- August 29-30: Dartmouth Royal Regatta
- August 30-Sept 2: Bournemouth Air Festival
- Sept 8-9: Southport Air Show
- Sept 12-14: Guernsey and Jersey Air Shows
- October 14: Duxford Autumn Air Show

## Falklands victims are remembered

THIS month sees the 30th anniversary of the surrender of Argentinian troops occupying the Falklands, and the successes and sacrifices of that campaign continue to be marked at ceremonies and events around the country and in the South Atlantic.

RFA tanker Gold Rover held a memorial service over the spot where destroyer HMS Sheffield sank following an Exocet missile attack on May 4 1982, with a wreath being cast onto the unusually calm sea.

A similarly sombre occasion saw serving and retired Jungle aircrewmen gather at RN Air Station Yeovilton's Memorial Avenue to pay their respects to Cpl Michael 'Doc' Love on the anniversary of his death in a Sea King crash.

The aircraft, from 846 Squadron, went down while transporting troops between HMS Intrepid and HMS Hermes.

Royal Naval Association branches have been marking the anniversary, among them Falmouth branch, which held a memorial service and commemorative lunch in the town.

Several shipmates either took part, knew someone involved or lost friends and shipmates in the conflict, and the guest speaker was Admiral Sir Michael Layard, who was Senior Naval Officer on board the doomed merchant ship Atlantic Conveyor 30 years ago.

Medical staff, P&O crew and former patients from hospital ship HMHS Uganda in 1982 renewed old friendships on board the luxury liner Aurora in Southampton, thanks to the cruise company.

And one of the prime movers in raising the profile of Uganda, former naval nurse Nicci Pugh, went from that reunion to deliver two lectures in Portsmouth Naval Base on the history of hospital ships and on Uganda's 1982 deployment in particular – the second drawing from her updated book *White Ship, Red Crosses*.

More than 600 veterans of the conflict and relatives saw the new Falklands Memorial, initiated by SAMA 82, unveiled at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire on May 20.

And a major conference on the conflict will mark the start of the Fleet Air Arm Museum's new Falklands exhibition at Yeovilton on June 30.

## Looking back

THE National Museum of the Royal Navy is offering visitors the chance to learn how to interpret information from Naval Service Certificates and to discover what archive resources are available in researching their family tree.

Two half-day workshops aim to give participants an overview as to what information is contained on a naval rating's continuous service certificate.

Participants should have a copy of relevant certificates prior to the workshops, which will be staged in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.

The workshops are on Saturday June 9 and Saturday October 13, between 10.30am and 1pm, and tickets cost £16.

For details call 023 9272 3795 or email [library@nmrn.org.uk](mailto:library@nmrn.org.uk)

# NAVY NEWS

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# A matter of record

**THERE** aren't many people who can casually remark that they have the records of James Bond's creator Ian Fleming on their desk...

The Service Records team is a small unit of four people tasked with handling the thousands of enquiries that come in throughout the year.

"Twelve thousand enquiries a year – by snail mail, fax, email, either directly from the individuals themselves or by referred emails," explains Andy Godfrey, the head of the Navy Disclosure Cell.

As a unit of the Commodore Naval Personnel, Andy's team have jurisdiction over the Service records of all RN and RM personnel from the late 1920s – prior to this date, the records are held by the National Archives at Kew (still widely known by its old name, the Public Records Office).

Expectations tend to be that the vast majority of queries are from old boys or their families seeking out the details of forgotten Naval careers – but that's not quite the case.

About 40 per cent of the enquiries to the team are indeed people writing for copies of their own records, often as *aide memoires* for books or family research projects.

A quarter of the enquiries received by the team regard corroboration for people who have left the Naval Service – the team cannot provide references, but can confirm the applicant's spell within the military.

Another 25 per cent are welfare enquiries. Andy said: "I had a phone call yesterday from a social worker in Jamaica. She just wanted to tell us how helpful we'd been for her client."

"As part of the Commonwealth he served in World War 2. The gentleman's records enabled the Jamaican authorities to pay him a pension, pay for his care – because he could prove that he is a veteran."

"So for the last years of his life, he will be supported by the Jamaican authorities."

Welfare cases can be much closer to home – the Erskine Home in Scotland will take residents with Alzheimer's, but again it has to be shown that people were veterans.

As the nature of the condition means that the elderly veterans are not always in full possession of their faculties, relatives with power of attorney approach the Records team so that they can prove the veteran's Service.

Applications can also come from military charities such as the Royal British Legion and SSAFA Forces Help for ex-Service personnel who have fallen on hard times, where again the team can help by proving the military record.

The final ten per cent of the workload is third-party enquiries; and these take all sorts of forms. It could be the coroner's court, the Child Support Agency or other Government departments.

It can even be the occasional TV researchers, as programmes such as *Who Do You Think You Are?* or *Heir Hunters* are put together.

And despite the destruction of some records during World War 2's bombing raids, the team's experience is that very few records can't be found at all.

Michelle Austin's attitude is typical of the team: "We don't like doing a nil trace. We're like dogs with bones, trying to track down the Service record."

However there are real restrictions on what can or cannot be released, under what authority and to whom.

To begin with, personnel records are purely about someone's Service and career. They aren't medical records and they aren't detailed about people's activities within a unit.

The Naval Records team cannot give you a detailed breakdown of the activities of an individual ship, its role in various operational theatres or even general details about the class of ship.

In fact, having spoken to them, it's clear that they'd love to be able to furnish individual enquirers with all the information they want – but there just isn't time to research all this extra information and do the job with which they are tasked.

"Things have got busier," Andy admitted. "The interesting thing was, when the Royal Navy introduced this Service according to statutory requirement, there was always the thought – just how big is this going to be? And will the novelty wear off?"

"The answer is – it has just got bigger. Partly because of the popularity of TV programmes. There's a huge amount of interest in genealogy and family history. And with the advent of the internet, there is so much more available to people at home from their dining room table, rather than driving around the country."

"When grandad dies, family members find his medals, and this generates interest. That starts the ball rolling."

Of course, not all veterans claimed the medals to which they were entitled, and surviving relatives can have them issued – with suitable proof of Service career.

(However if the medals were issued at the time but subsequently lost, the MOD will not replace them.)

And now to the mystery of Ian Fleming's military career and why exactly the records sit locked within a desk on Whale Island...

"Two or three years ago, the Imperial War Museum ran an Ian Fleming/007 exhibition. It had all sorts of exhibits and the rest in it," said Andy.

"They requested the loan of Ian Fleming's Service Record which we loaned for the duration of that exhibition at the request of the family."

"People are normally only sent a copy of the Service Record, but this was the actual original card."

"It was collected by the museum's handling agency, carefully wrapped in bleach-free paper, and a free valuation was provided by the museum – £26,000 for a few documents."

All the records are guarded with great care by the Naval records team. Vast old ledgers bear the handwritten record of people's entry into the Naval Service and their moves around the main British bases.

The majority of the Service records are paper, a vast bulk stored at a specialist facility in Swadlincote, from which they are recalled at need.

Between the 1970s and 1990s, records were stored on microfiche – and a buttress of cabinets store thousands of these miniaturised records on Whale Island in Portsmouth.

It's only in recent years that records have moved into a digital format and are stored within computers.

Sorting through the various sources of information is a slow and cautious process, extracting the correct details from myriad sources based on precise information.

But it is also a rewarding one.

"Lots of people say they get no thanks for the job they do. I think in this job we get thanked a lot," said Andy.

"We genuinely care. We understand the impact that a record can have – it's not just a bit of paper, but a person."

"Records have the capacity to change people's lives."



## USEFUL INFORMATION

If an individual is searching for their own Service records, there is no cost. Or if he or she is deceased, and their spouse is seeking the record, again there is no cost.

Otherwise each search costs £30 – identically priced across all three Services.

There are a number of forms which need to be submitted with each request – and the correct paperwork depends on if you are searching for yourself, a family member or for any other reason.

Depending on the nature of the enquiry, a response should be received within a maximum of 40 calendar days of the properly completed request.

Visit [www.royalnavy.mod.uk/servicerecords](http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/servicerecords) for a link to all the appropriate forms.

Please read the associated web page carefully as it provides all the details for the necessary paperwork and what information can and cannot be released about an individual.

If you do not have access to the internet, write to:

CNPers Disclosure Cell  
MP G-2, Room 48  
West Battery  
Whale Island  
Portsmouth PO2 8DX

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# JUNE 1982

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
<div>31</div> <div>  <p>A Harrier lands for fuel on HMS Fearless</p> </div>	<div>1</div> <div> <p><b>Tuesday June 1</b></p> <p>5 Infantry Brigade – including elements of 1 Welsh Guards, 2 Scots Guards and 1/7 Gurkha Rifles – starts to disembark at San Carlos.</p> </div>	<div>2</div> <div> <p><b>Wednesday June 2</b></p> <p>2 Para reach Bluff Cove area.</p> </div>	<div>3</div>
<div>7</div> <div> <p><b>Monday June 7:</b></p> <p>Lack of landing craft mean half of Welsh Guards land at Fitzroy but remainder have to return with Fearless to San Carlos; they depart again in the evening on board Landing Craft Logistic ships RFA Sir Galahad and RFA Sir Tristram.</p> <p>3 Cdo Brigade HQ established on Mount Kent.</p> </div>	<div>8</div> <div> <p><b>Tuesday June 8:</b></p> <p>HMS Plymouth hit by four bombs in Falkland Sound (right); none explode but depth charge is detonated, injuring five.</p> <p>Sir Galahad and Sir Tristram bombed in Fitzroy while waiting to disembark Welsh Guards – almost 50 die in the attack on Sir Galahad, while over 100 are injured, 40 seriously, many suffering severe burns. Fleet Air Arm helicopters fly low over the burning ship to rescue survivors. Sir Tristram, damaged by a bomb which exploded after the ship had been evacuated (although two crew were killed by gunfire), is later recommissioned, but Sir Galahad burned out and was scuttled on June 25 by a torpedo from HMS Onyx.</p> <p>LCU-4 – Foxtrot-4 – from HMS Fearless is bombed at Choiseul Sound on transit with vehicles for 5 Infantry Bde from Goose Green to Fitzroy, killing six RN and RM personnel. The landing craft later sinks.</p> </div>	<div>9</div> <div>  </div>	
<div>14</div> <div> <p><b>Monday June 14:</b></p> <p>By mid-morning Argentinian troops are seen retreating to Stanley in disarray and British forces hold all high ground around the capital. Despite exhortation from Gen Galtieri to fight till the bitter end, Gen Mario Menendez decides to surrender to Maj Gen Moore.</p> </div>	<div>15</div> <div> <p><b>Tuesday June 15:</b></p> <p>British officers flown to outlying settlements to accept surrender of local Argentinian commanders.</p> <p>SS Canberra embarks more than 1,000 Argentinian PoWs at San Carlos.</p> </div>	<div>16</div> <div> <p><b>Wednesday June 16:</b></p> <p>Canberra embarks almost 2,000 more PoWs in the Stanley area.</p> <p>UK Government announces official death toll of 255 military and civilian personnel, with around 300 injured.</p> </div>	<div>17</div> <div> <p><b>Thursday June 17:</b></p> <p>Gen Galtieri resigns as backlas Argentina begins.</p> </div>
<div> <p>Royal Marines of 45 Cdo advance on Stanley</p>  </div>	<div> <p>A captured machine gun is put back into service by 42 Cdo RM on Mount Harriet</p>  </div>	<div>23</div> <div>  <p>42 Cdo RM advance along the main road to Stanley two days before Argentine forces surrender</p> </div>	<div> <p>Gen Mario Menendez (right) was being disarmed in Stanley</p>  </div>
<div>28</div> <div> <p>Argentinian POWs march to surrender their weapons</p>  </div>	<div> <p>Argentinian POWs in Stanley</p>  </div>		



Friday

Saturday

Sunday

**4**  
**Friday June 4:**  
2 Para occupy Bluff Cove and Fitzroy, which they find undefended.  
UK and USA veto UN Security Council Panamanian-Spanish call for immediate ceasefire, fearing the call for Argentinian forces to withdraw was not sufficiently specific.

**5**  
**Saturday June 5:**  
Scots Guards depart San Carlos in the evening on board HMS Intrepid, bound for Fitzroy.

**6**  
**Sunday June 6:**  
Lack of communication leads to Army Air Corps Gazelle being shot down in the early morning by Sea Dart from HMS Cardiff.  
Scots Guards land at Fitzroy by LCU – a long, rough transfer.  
Welsh Guards depart San Carlos on board HMS Fearless, bound for Fitzroy.

**11**  
**Friday June 11:**  
British forces begin the final push towards Stanley, supported by gunfire from RN ships; three women die in bombardment, the only civilian casualties of the conflict.  
RN Wessex helicopter carries out rocket attack on Argentinian military HQ on Stanley waterfront.

**12**  
**Saturday June 12:**  
3 Para take Mount Longdon, 42 Cdo RM take Mount Harriet and 45 Cdo take Two Sisters overnight.  
HMS Glamorgan badly damaged by land-launched Exocet missile, killing 13, as she returns to task force from gunline.  
5 Infantry Brigade moves into position for assault on outer edges of Argentinian defences around Stanley.

**13**  
**Sunday June 13:**  
Battle for Tumbledown (Juliet Coy 42 Cdo fire on enemy positions, below), Mount William and Wireless Ridge begin in the evening.



**18**  
**Friday June 18:**  
Canberra sails from the Falklands for Argentina once she had been promised safe passage. She delivers her POW passengers at Puerto Madryn the following day.

**19**

**20**  
**Sunday June 20:**  
HMS Endurance and HMS Yarmouth, supported by RFA Olmeda and tug Salvageman, land forces on Southern Thule in the South Sandwich Islands. Operation Keyhole succeeds as Argentinian personnel surrender without a fight.



**25**  
**Friday June 25:**  
Governor Rex Hunt returns to Stanley as civil commissioner. Canberra sails north for the UK with 40, 42 and elements of 45 Cdo on board.



Men of Naval Party 8901, who fought with Juliet Coy 42 Cdo, replace the Falkland Islands flag at Government House after the Argentinian surrender



A Junglie Sea King lends a hand shifting supplies to outlying settlements in Camp





● HMS Biter escorts HMS Turbulent off the west coast of Scotland during the URNU patrol boat's Easter deployment

# Variety on the doorstep

YOU might think that HMS Daring has the best spring deployment: first tour of duty, global attention, brand-new ship, patrolling the Gulf.

Or maybe HMS Dauntless – pretty much the same as her sister, except South Atlantic-bound.

But you'd be hard-pressed to find few more varied and exciting weeks in the RN 2012 calendar than those experienced by Her Majesty's Ships Biter and Charger: one submarine, some Search and Rescue action, rough seas, picturesque ports, great cities... and one distillery.

The two patrol boats serve the universities of Manchester/Salford and Liverpool respectively and left their traditional home on the Mersey to give their students a more in-depth insight into life in the RN.

Given the make-up of their crew – five experienced RN sailors and up to a dozen cadets, for many of whom the spring deployment was their first – and the short range of the P2000s, the duo put into port every day.

That meant a new harbour almost every day – and often ones which rarely see the White Ensign.

So first stop for Biter and Charger, the Lancashire 'port' of Preston, where the ships carried out berthing exercises in order to get the students up to speed with ropework.

Across the Irish Sea next, to Douglas on the Isle of Man, before back to the west coast of England and the tiny port

of Silloth in Cumbria – Biter's affiliated town – where youngsters from several local schools were invited on board.

As the deployment continued northwards, Biter was invited to escort HMS Turbulent, which was making a rare appearance on the surface – an ideal opportunity for a few shots for the photo album.

Barely had Turbulent disappeared beneath the waves than a Sea King from HMS Gannet appeared overhead for some search and rescue practice (not that Gannet need too much as Britain's busiest SAR unit...).

The rescuers winched two students from Biter's very small deck, providing some useful training for the fliers... and an unforgettable experience for the cadets.

Before a crew change in Glasgow, students from Manchester and Salford URNU were given a guided tour of the final Type 45 destroyer, HMS Duncan, in the latter stages of completion.

The second student crew enjoyed the delights of Glasgow nightlife before sailing for the small Scottish town of Troon (famous for its links golf course, eight-time host to the Open) then on to the isle of Islay on the edge of the Inner Hebrides.

The students hosted members of the local community with a cocktail party, which gave them

● HMS Biter is almost lost amongst the forest of masts at Whitehaven Marina in Cumbria

the chance to learn the art of spreading the RN word to the wider public – and to learn about a close-knit island community.

With Biter and Charger enjoying a 'harbour day' – a chance to get some general maintenance done – in the Queen of the Hebrides, the students helped out at Islay House Community Garden, performing some of the more laborious tasks.

The weather was kind, and their efforts were rewarded with home-made cakes from the volunteers.

In the afternoon, there was a visit to the Bruichladdich whisky distillery – one of eight on the island – in front of which the two ships were berthed.

As well as whisky, Bruichladdich also produces The Botanist dry gin, samples of which were greatly appreciated.

The next port of call was due to be Portrush in Northern Ireland – a journey of just 40 miles from Islay – but the heavy swell in the Atlantic/Irish Sea proved to be too much for the patrol boats, which decided the more sheltered waters of Campbeltown were a better bet.

That proved to be the end of the rough weather for the ships, which were blessed with clear skies and sunshine for the remainder of the deployment through the Irish Sea, past the Isle of Man, from Bangor to Holyhead.

The return journey to Liverpool also provided an opportunity for a number of machinery breakdown drills to show the students how to react in such circumstances.

● HMS Biter in the Firth of Clyde during her Easter deployment



# Students step up to challenges

A PARTY of 15 students and two officers from Bristol URNU travelled north to Rothiemurchus Lodge, near Aviemore in the Scottish Highlands, for a week of adventurous training under the title Exercise Celtic Breeze 2012.

Along with Oxford URNU students we were treated to five days of clambering up mountains, abseiling down river canyons and basking in the beautiful landscape of the Cairngorms National Park, writes Mid J Rencher.

The Lodge, our accommodation for the week, is maintained solely for the use of Armed Forces personnel and Reservists, mainly for adventurous activities.

We were entirely self-sustained for the week, with all housekeeping and cooking done ourselves – luckily, Oxford URNU brought

a Navy caterer with them, so we were never short of fine cuisine. . .

The Lodge was less than 15 minutes drive into Aviemore, where our guides – professional 'outdoor instructors', which is perhaps code for 'adrenaline junkie' – were based.

On the first and second days of our week they took great pleasure in taking us canyoning and gorge-walking, the basic idea being to squeeze into two wetsuits (to prevent hypothermia, we were cheerfully told) and negotiate our way down river gorges, which involved jumps, swims, abseils and natural slides.

Zip-wiring was altogether drier, but no less exhilarating – the series of wires zigzagged across a wooded valley, and progressively got faster and longer, ending with a 30-second

ride (which sounds short, but feels like an age while being buffeted by the breeze suspended 40ft above a churning river) with amazing views of the mountains.

Hill-walking was just as it sounds; we were led along the stark and beautiful Lairig Ghru pass and within striking distance of the peak of Braeriach, the third highest mountain in Great Britain.

While mountain biking we circumnavigated Loch Morlich (below left) and sped down old loggers' paths.

Our final activity was a day's canoeing, featuring a series of rapids. How enjoyable you found this was strictly proportional to how often you fell in.

Our aims for the week were to experience the broadest range of physical and mental challenges, and to push ourselves, as individuals and as a team, to overcome them.

Each of us had our own personal trials to overcome. For some, it was conquering a fear of heights while zip-wiring over deep valleys; for some it was abseiling off precipices into an unseen pool of freezing water; for some it was dealing with the pure physical discomfort of mountain-bike saddles (which can be more serious than it sounds...); and for others it was the stamina needed to keep putting one foot in front of the other on top of a windswept, snowy mountain.



Easter weekend signalled the beginning of Phase 2 – Exercise Dark Blue, writes Mid H Brayford.

Phase 1 had enjoyed some of the warmest March weather in Scotland on record, so those on Phase 2 hoped for the same.

Early on it became apparent this would not be the case, and we would be in for some 'character-building' wet and windy days.

Early (for students at least) on Easter Sunday morning, we departed on a gentle hill walk to break us in to the activities ahead.

This took us through boggy terrain (many students quickly found out whether their chosen footwear was waterproof), on to higher ground, with amazing views of Cairn Gorm and its ski slopes.

Monday morning signalled the beginning of the week's activities,

with the first two activities being mountain biking and hill walking.

The biking took in a 30km route through forests and around a loch, while the walk was a 17km route up Lurcher's Crag, a 1,053m summit, requiring navigational skills (under the watchful eye of our outdoors instructors).

The route included rough, rocky sections and steep slopes in bad weather – visibility was down to 100m in heavy snow showers.

The remaining activities were mainly water-based, including paddling two-man inflatable boats on the Spey (above), white-water rafting on the Findhorn, canyoning and zip-wiring.

Both the inflatables and rafts allowed the students to work together as a team.

After a short safety briefing we

## Ardrossan welcomes Dasher

FASLANE patrol boat HMS Dasher has made her inaugural affiliation visit to Ardrossan, on the west coast of Scotland.

The Archer-class vessel, part of the Faslane Patrol Boat Squadron, has only recently been affiliated with the town, and the crew sailed from Clyde Naval Base for a warm Ardrossan welcome.

Over the four-day visit the vessel and crew had a packed programme of community activities, beginning with a poignant wreath-laying ceremony at the wreck site of the wartime HMS Dasher.

That Dasher – an American-built escort carrier – had been under the White Ensign for less than nine months when she blew up in the Clyde estuary of Ardrossan on March 27 1943, killing more than 350 of the 500 men on board.

The explosion was believed to have been caused by a fire which ignited fuel stored on Dasher.

Joining the current patrol ship for the event were members of the Dasher Association and Sea Cadets from the Ardrossan unit.

After the ceremony the crew attended lunch with the Dasher Association before heading to Saltcoats for a social evening.

During the visit the patrol boat also gave pupils from three local schools a taste of life at sea.

On the Monday, youngsters from Auchenharvie Academy joined the ship, while on Tuesday it was the turn of Ardrossan Academy and St Matthew's Academy, who were introduced to the workings of the ship and some of the life-saving equipment on board.

Members of North Ayrshire Council were also hosted, as were representatives from Strathclyde Police and local teachers.

Ties were sealed between the town and HMS Dasher with an exchange of gifts, with council members presenting the CO, Lt Mark Heward, with a commemorative decanter, and receiving in return a ship's crest.

The boat returned to Faslane with a party of Sea Cadets gaining experience as acting Officers of the Watch.

Lt Heward said: "Our first affiliation visit was a great success.

"We were given such a warm welcome by everyone we met at Ardrossan, and it was fantastic to be able to host so many members of the community.

"We hope to return regularly to consolidate our links with the town and people, and perhaps even open the ship to the community at some time in the near future."

set off and soon entered the first, and most dangerous, of the rapids.

The first raft passed over the rapid without incident, and put big smiles on everyone's faces.

These were quickly wiped away as the second raft caught a boulder and capsized, throwing students into the water.

Without a moment's hesitation, students were plucked from the cold water and strong currents, and brought safely onto the first raft.

This continued whilst the second raft was righted and re-floated by the very calm and extremely competent instructors.

At times students were cold, tired, and just wanted to pack it in and go back to the lodge, but team morale kept them going.

Where it seemed morale was low, it was quickly brought back up with jokes, laughter, banter (and the occasional chocolate bar).

Every single student and staff member who went on this exercise improved their team-working and leadership skills, from organising the rota of people to assist with cooking, to navigating up a mountain, as well as improving their communication and social skills throughout the activities.

The majority of students who attended improved their fitness, and experienced outdoor activities in such beautiful scenery, while for some it has been an inspiration to continue such activities.





**When you help us,  
you are helping a huge Naval family**



## Liz's long burst

(Jackspeak: a lengthy conversation that is mostly one-way)

SIX months – a look back (phew)...

Here at the RNRMC we like to think that we are a non-stop, fast moving organisation. However by the time you read this edition of Navy News, we will already be half way through our fundraising year and before we commence our busy summer season of events, we thought we would take a moment to stop, pause for breath and reflect on 2012 so far – and of course thank and acknowledge everyone who has supported us.

And golly, as you can see by all the pictures and stories on this page, what a lot has happened!

In overview, we now have nearly 60 per cent more people than last year signed up on Virgin Giving to raise money for us; we have smashed the 10,000 people signed up to Payroll Giving, which means over one third of the Naval Service regularly give; we have sold more merchandise than ever before, and that's without including the new Diamond Jubilee Commemorative CD from the Portsmouth Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines; and of course we have been involved in many wonderful events such as the Mountbatten Festival of Music, Beat Retreat, the Royal Muster at Windsor, the Falkland Islands 30 commemorations and the Field Gun competition.

I am not sure this pause for breath will last for too long. There is a lot planned – so we hope you will join us over the next six months as we attend the establishments summer shows, air shows and families days, the Portsmouth Air Festival (where we are the major beneficiary), the Edinburgh Tattoo and a host of fun runs, 10km and challenges.

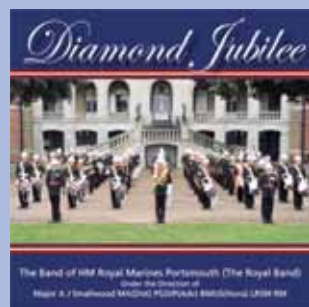
Please encourage your local school to take part in our school initiative in October with our colleagues at the ABF The Soldiers' Charity and RAF Benevolent Fund – the Red, White and Blue day ([www.redwhiteblueday.co.uk](http://www.redwhiteblueday.co.uk)). And we are sure to see you during the Olympics events both in London and in Weymouth.

Please don't forget to take part in our annual Fundraising Trophy and keep in touch by visiting our Facebook page and website (we may even have a new website over the next couple of months) and please contact any one of us for help, support and fundraising ideas and keep your stories and photos coming in.

Finally, after that short pause for breath – can I say a **big** thank you to everyone who has helped us achieve success so far.

The next time we have a moment to reflect on all the fundraising activities it will no doubt be Christmas!

**Liz Ridgway**  
Director of Fundraising  
and Marketing,  
RNRMC  
[liz.ridgway@rnrmc.org.uk](mailto:liz.ridgway@rnrmc.org.uk)



## Musical memento of jubilee

Visit our website to buy the new CD from the Band of the Royal Marines Portsmouth in celebration of this year's Diamond Jubilee.

The Princess Royal has recorded a foreword for this special recording. Tracks include favourites

of the Royal Family: *Crown Imperial*, *Royal Salute*, *Post Horn Gallop*, *Highland Cathedral*, and *Land of Hope and Glory*.

Profits from the sale will go to the RNRMC, the charity that supports the whole of the Naval family; this includes

the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Maritime Reserves, QARNNS, Royal Fleet Auxiliary and former WRNS.

The CD costs just £10 (plus P&P); available from our online shop at [www.rnrmc.org.uk](http://www.rnrmc.org.uk), and at events we are attending throughout the year.

# A snapshot of the past six months

THIS is a glimpse at just some of the charity fundraising occasions and events that have been funded so far this year.

We love to see your photos and updates – but we want more.

We want to double, triple, the number of photos that come in to us so we can update our Facebook and website pages every week with all the latest happenings taking place around the Fleet.

This is your chance to let people know what you're doing for your charity.

Keep in touch with us either through Facebook, or by contacting Nicola Harper on [nicola.harper@rnrmc.org.uk](mailto:nicola.harper@rnrmc.org.uk)



A team of Royal Naval personnel based at HMS Sultan in Gosport pulled a field gun 56 miles through the New Forest

824 NAS got on their bikes to raise money for the RNRMC



Over £400 was raised at the Hayling Island St George's celebration



The RN's Under-19s football team took part in the Dallas Cup, the oldest international youth soccer tournament in the USA



Once again many thanks for the Minor Grant award that went some ways into offsetting the individual unit. 42 Cdo were very successful over the period of the champs with lots of prizes and medals

## Who do I talk to about payroll giving?

From the man who can tell you everything you need to know about payroll giving;

We are now five months into the year with payroll giving now standing at 34.37 per cent.

This is a fantastic achievement and we are well on our way to reaching our goal for this year.

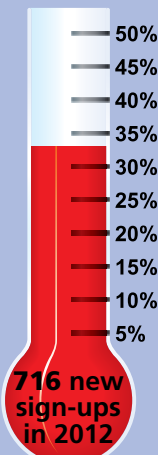
As always we need to keep the pedal on the metal and we need you all to continue to support your charity through payroll giving and increase the take-up; to help keep the momentum going we are about to embark on another campaign, so starting from September and running through to January 2013 we will be running a competition to reward the maximum percentage increase in take-up in

establishments, ships, submarines and air stations, with five prizes up for grabs in this competition, each of the winners will receive £1,000 for their welfare funds.

The winners will be presented with the funds in March at a conference and awards ceremony in HMS Collingwood (keep an eye out on our website and in this section of Navy News for further competition and award ceremony updates).

For further information or to arrange a 40-minute presentation contact Dean using any of the methods below:

Dean Rogers  
Payroll Giving Manager  
[dean.rogers@rnrmc.org.uk](mailto:dean.rogers@rnrmc.org.uk)  
Tel: 023 9254 8155  
Mob: 07714 306178



## SUPPORT US



Visit our online store for a range of clothing, gifts, accessories and other items which will help us to support you.

Baseball cap: £9  
[www.rnrmc.org.uk](http://www.rnrmc.org.uk)

## UPCOMING EVENTS



**BEATING RETREAT:** A musical spectacular featuring the Beating Retreat and Ceremonial Sunset at Horse Guards Parade in London on June 6 and 7 at 6pm.

Tickets cost from £15. Call the box office on 023 9231 2006 or visit [www.rnrmc.org.uk](http://www.rnrmc.org.uk) for tickets or more information.



**YEOVILTON AIR DAY:** Planes, helicopters and people gather for an action-packed day out in Somerset on June 23.

Tickets cost from £18 in advance. Call the tickets sales centre on 08845 781 781 or visit [www.yeoviltonairday.co.uk](http://www.yeoviltonairday.co.uk) for tickets or more information.



**ARMED FORCES DAY:** This year Armed Forces Day takes place in the heartland of the Royal Navy in Plymouth on Saturday June 30.

Celebrations will include a parade through the city streets with troops from all three Services, military bands and veterans of all ages, finishing on Plymouth Hoe for a drumhead service.

Entertainment will continue throughout the day.

## CONTACT US

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Building 29, HMS Excellent  
Whale Island  
Portsmouth  
Hampshire PO2 8ER  
[fundraising@rnrmc.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@rnrmc.org.uk)



Join us on Facebook: search for 'Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity'

[www.rnrmc.org.uk](http://www.rnrmc.org.uk)





● Montrose approaches the Bridge of the Americas at Balboa – leading to the western gateway to the Panama Canal and the Miraflores locks (above)



pictures: la(phot) james crawford, frpu west



● (l-r) Montrose prepares to come alongside in New Orleans just ahead of the Crescent City Connection spanning the ship's company give a big hand (sorry) to the New Orleans Hornets

# Coming

IT'S famously called the Big Easy, but the six days HMS Montrose spent in New Orleans were far from relaxing as she joined Americans commemorating the last time the two countries fought each other.

Having spent the bulk of her six and a half months away from the UK in the South Atlantic, the Devonport-based frigate paid a brief visit to the Pacific, nipped through the Panama Canal, and emerged in the Caribbean and made for the Gulf of Mexico.

Montrose was the UK's representative at the opening of bicentennial events to mark the War of 1812 – a war partially caused by the Royal Navy, and one which saw British warships engaged with the Great Lakes to the Eastern Seaboard and Gulf of Mexico.

To kick-off commemorations, the Americans invited warships from the UK, Canada, France, Ecuador and Indonesia to join their own warships and Coast Guard vessels on the Mississippi for New Orleans Navy Week 2012.

The Big Easy lies 118 miles up 'Ol' Man River'. First there is a 24-mile approach up the South-West Pass – "Fascinating to see," explains Lt Gemma Britton, Montrose's navigator, "as there was a narrow strip of marshy land either side of the channel and then the sea the other side of that on both sides."

The waterway takes vessels as far as Pilottown, a tiny settlement (pop.19) at the Head of the Passes, where the Mississippi splits into a handful of channels.

The river pilots spend two weeks at a time at this remote outpost, guiding shipping up and down the great waterway.

With the American assault ship USS Wasp ahead of her, Montrose embarked her pilot and made for New Orleans, averaging 15-20kts – despite the confined waters (just 350 yards wide at their narrowest point).

Around the city itself, river traffic became particularly hectic with ferries and other vessels competing for space with the arriving warships – in some cases leaving just 100 yards between them and the Type 23.

Safely in the heart of New Orleans, the frigate berthed in the shadow of New Orleans' iconic Crescent City Connection – cantilever bridge spanning the 2,180ft-wide river.

As well as opening their gangway to thousands of visitors, the men and women of Montrose – on the final stages of an Atlantic patrol deployment – got ashore to take part in numerous events including:

- the Louisiana seafood cook-off;
- a rugby match against Loyola University at the Pan Am Stadium;
- a community relations project to help the city recover from Hurricane Katrina;
- attendance at the New Orleans Hornets basketball team's final home game of the season, with a return trip of the Hornets to the ship;
- a 100m dash to mark 100 days to the start of the London 2012 Olympic Games.

CH Luke Gaffney and LCH Adam 'Tracy' Chapman flew the flag at the cook-off against US Navy 'culinary specialists' (aka chefs...), teaming up with the best civilian chefs to produce one seafood dish.

Each team was given \$200 to spend in a local supermarket and then had 30 minutes to prepare, cook and serve their dish. It was made even more challenging because all the cooking took place outside on what was effectively a camping stove.

"I was half expecting the Americans to have sent some kind of Casey Ryback/Alain Ducasse hybrid, but everyone turned out to be pretty friendly," said Luke – referring to Steven Seagal's *Under Siege* Navy SEAL/chef... and the Michelin three-starred Monégasque chef who runs a restaurant at the Dorchester (*inter alia*)... and isn't a Navy SEAL...

Luke teamed up with Cory Bahr, head chef and owner of Cotton restaurant, reigning King of Louisiana sea food, "and, as it turned out, a pretty decent bloke as well". The duo produced crispy skin black drum with a corn, bacon and crawfish tail salad, turnip and fennel pollen puree and watermelon and basil vinaigrette which was

- a) delicious
- b) a crowd pleaser and
- c) simple but effective.

The other key factor that it could be cooked by the pair to enjoy the free of organisers had provided.

Did they win? No, a chef specialist, from the USS but it was the taking part which counted...

FOR the basketball, LWtr Judson Cup of his shipmates to at seat New Orleans Stadium disappointed.

"Some of my shipmates what was happening on the caught up in the atmosphere truly great experience," said "It was a wonderful evening backed with an excitement created by the passion of the stop entertainment."

In return, the ship hosted stars. "It is easy for us unique environment we fascination that our visitors work place and home was the leading writer added. to take some photographs deemed to be a very memorable."

The visit to New Orleans fun. Amid the pomp a team from Montrose took helping the community and rebuild after Hurricane wreaked large-scale devastation years ago.

Damage is still evident of the Big Easy and it continued to work tirelessly number of charitable breathe life back into homes leisure areas.

Montrose's men and women to work with Hike for organisation which initially woman's determination to of the Appalachian Trail and plant a tree for each of the had walked to help replace by the storm.

Whilst still planting trees also broadened its scope public open spaces, and the crew (60 sailors) swapped parkland of Lakeshore Drive do just that.

● A 'sporty' crossing of the Atlantic on the way home while (right) the Montrose team help smarten up a community project still suffering from the effects of Hurricane Katrina in 2005







ing Ol' Man River; is it a Mexican Wave... or a Village People fan club? The sailors have fun at the basketball; the spirit of Kenny Everett lives on as

# to America

(apparently) was quickly enough for the beer which the

ef, sorry culinary Wasp triumphed, t (and free beer)

RN hoops star encouraged 95 attend the 17,000-n. They were not

had no idea at all the court but were here and having a mid Judson.

ning of basketball ing atmosphere the fans and non-

ed the basketball to forget what a live in, but the rs showed for our brilliant to see,"

"It was their turn hs of what they orable morning,"

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in some quarters ts citizens have lessly through a rganisations to nes, parkland and

omen volunteered KaTREEena, an ly grew from one o hike the length nd, on her return, e 2,175 miles she ce those torn up

es, the charity has e to rejuvenating ver a third of the d the ship for the

ive to help them

The Lakeshore was one of the worst hit areas in the city, bearing the brunt of the broken levees and remaining underwater for the longest period.

Previously an area of relaxation where New Orleanians would enjoy days by the shore, roads are still closed and public buildings are in a state of disrepair.

Working over three days in the Louisiana sun, 25 sailors per day donned overalls to conduct a variety of tasks that would turn this area back in to a usable public space.

The Montrosers worked alongside counterparts from the US Coast Guard, Canadian Navy and the US Navy's fabled construction corps, the Seabees, tackling the de-rusting, priming and painting of large public shelters and buildings along the lakefront.

After three full days of chipping, scraping, painting and constructing the team had transformed the shelters into gleaming white, welcoming structures; built new solid-wood park benches and rejuvenated public toilets and snack areas.

"The sailors saw first-hand the magnitude of the problems caused by Katrina, and it's fantastic that we've had the opportunity to make a real contribution to the city that welcomed us with such enthusiasm," said Lt Rich Bell, Montrose's Lynx observer who oversaw the ship's input to the spruce-up effort.

That was not the only physical effort demanded of the ship while alongside on the Mississippi. The frigate marked 100 days to the beginning of the London 2012 Olympics with a 100-metre dash against sailors from HMCS St Johns in the presence of Her Britannic Majesty's Deputy Consul General Andrew Pryce.

With sailors from both ships cheering, Montrose's AB John Maher crossed the line (marked by an Olympic flag) first.

The 100m dash was played out on the waterfront. The rugby team's final match of the 2011-12 'season' took place at the Pan Am Stadium against Loyola University, known as the Wolf Pack.

Although new to the sport (just three years' experience), they've invested £25K in it, converted some American footballers, and have recently been crowned US University Division 2 Champions.

But were they a match for 15 matelots? Er, no.

Montrose ran out 62-7 winners – but the students didn't begrudge the visitors their victory, treating the team to a tour of New Orleans' famous Bourbon Street in its legendary French Quarter as part of post-match celebrations.

**B**ETWEEN them, the nine ships attending the event – led by assault ship USS Wasp – drew more than 120,000 visitors during their time alongside.

The war of 1812 actually dragged on until 1815 and cost the lives of upwards of 20,000 souls from battle and disease (15,000 on the American side, over 5,000 British and Empire troops and sailors).

It was sparked chiefly by Britain's ongoing trade embargo and blockade aimed at Napoleonic France and the Royal Navy's pressganging of merchant sailors and ships into its service.

The war inspired the lyrics to the American national anthem and saw British troops burn Washington (including the White House and the newly-completed Capitol) in 1814, before the British were decisively beaten at New Orleans in January 1815.

Given the length and scope of the conflict, events will take place over the next three years in New York, Baltimore, Boston and on the Great Lakes to commemorate various battles and key moments.

For Montrose's CO Cdr Jonathan Lett, the six days in the Big Easy were the perfect curtain-raiser to those commemorations.

"Montrose was in a position which allowed her to build powerful bonds with our fellow seafaring nations," he said.

"We engendered great friendships through interaction at all levels; and the generous hospitality offered to my entire crew over the whole week ensured that this was a visit that none of us will ever forget. There were many highlights but, for me, just being asked to represent the Royal Navy at such a prestigious event was a fitting way to end our deployment."

**A**S IT was, New Orleans wasn't quite the end. After this Bayou tapestry (sorry), the final port of call was the final British Overseas Territory to host F236 during her six and a half months away: Bermuda.

Nearly 16 years after the ship's last visit, Bermudians have a lasting reminder

of HMS Montrose 2012 stopover as her current crew smartened up the badge painted by their forebears in the mid-90s – thus upholding a long-standing naval tradition.

In days of yore, ships visiting yards around the world left their mark by painting their badges on the walls (in the same way that commanding officers presented mounted badges to local dignitaries).

That tradition has all but died out – but the historic dockyard at Bermuda is one place where it persists.

The yard dates back to the early 19th Century, but when it closed as a Royal Navy base (HMS Malabar) at the beginning of the 50s the tradition continued – thanks not least to many visiting warships from other nations.

Today there are a good 200 badges, crests and mementoes left not just by warships, but also merchantmen.

The Devonport-based frigate visited twice in quick succession in the mid-90s, but has not been back; so the painting was restored to its original glory – and, of course, today's crew added a personal touch to mark their presence.

The emblems can be found on Ireland Island, rather tucked away from the rest of the beautifully-restored old Royal Naval Dockyard – and generally missed by the thousands of tourists who visit Bermuda every year.

"Generations of sailors have made their mark in a unique way that will ensure their visit is not forgotten," said weapon engineer officer Lt Cdr Charlie Deal.

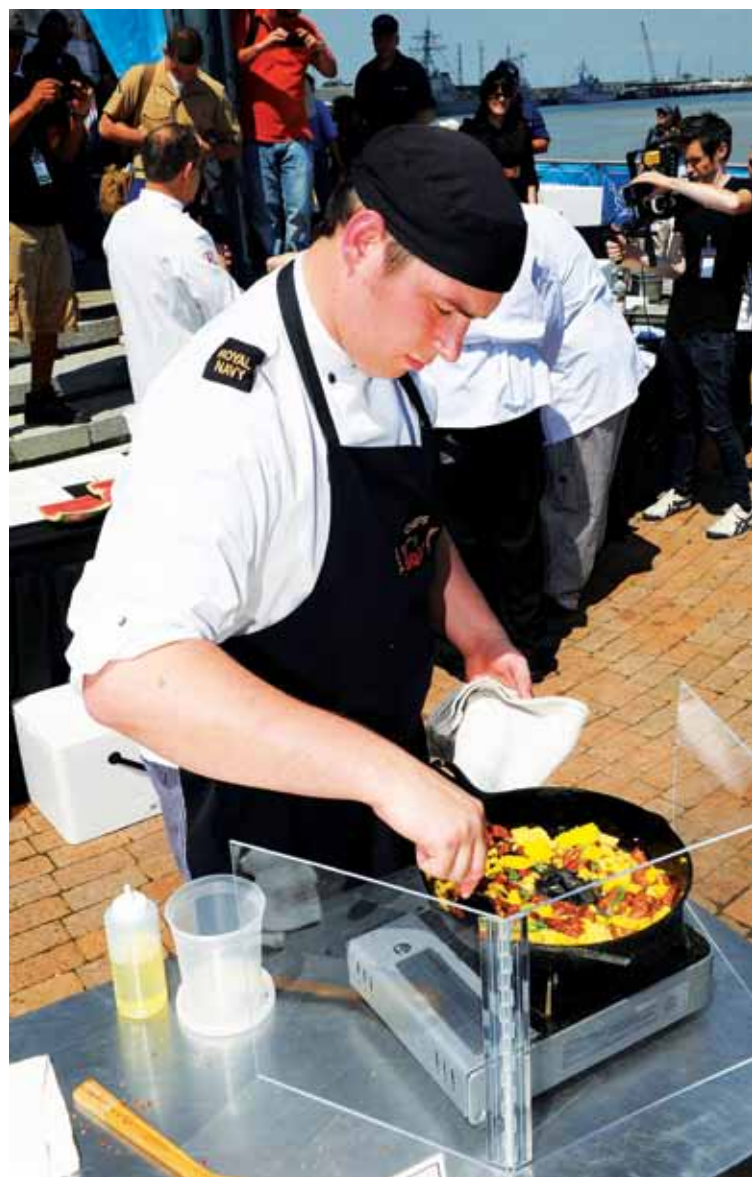
"It's a great tradition to follow – Montrose was glad to leave her mark in Bermuda at the end of what has been a long but memorable deployment."

And so on a very old wall, in a very old dockyard, in a very old British territory, a unique piece of Royal Navy history lies baking in the sun.

Not that it's *always* sunny, for on leaving Bermuda bound for home, Montrose ran into roughers and was shipping green over her forecandle.

Conditions aboard were described, with typical RN understatement, as "not overly comfortable".

But were the ship's company downhearted? No. For the prize of a homecoming awaited them just days later.



● Montrose prepares to come alongside in Bermuda and (above) CH Luke Gaffney produces a treat at the seafood cook-off





# Service numbers don't add up

IN 1853 some ratings were given a number for the first time – a Continuous Service Number – but it was not until January 1 1873 that all Royal Navy ratings were given an Official Number.

Infuriatingly, the Admiralty changed the system on a number of occasions after that, for reasons that may never be known or are hidden in archives.

How much more interesting it would be to know that some 1.5 million men (including some thousands of women since 1993) had been given an Official Number to date and how much easier for naval historians and family historians it would be too!

None of the numbers issued in the past were more than six digits but it surely would have been no hardship to run to seven digits, although fortnightly main payment in larger warships, in the days of cash payment, would have taken a little longer!

Thus, Seaman Jack Tar joining the RN in the coming weeks issued with, say, Service Number 1550551 (instead of, perhaps, the JPA system's 30033003), might have been able to know that he was the 500,000th rating to join since 1943 and the 1.55 millionth or so since 1873.

These figures are only my rough guesstimates based on some manning figures for the past 140 years.

Batches of numbers were introduced for six different branches on January 1 1894 and there were various changes to prefixes in the first half of the last century.

Another fresh start was made on April 1 1953 when the system began, no doubt for some good reason, with 925000.

Just six years later, in 1959, there was yet another new system, starting this time with 050001 and that lasted to beyond the number 200000 when yet another system, an eight-digit 'employee number' starting with 300, was introduced with JPA in November 2006.

Some historical information is offered on the National Archives website at [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documentsonline/royal-navy-service](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documentsonline/royal-navy-service) where may also be found the SCs of the late centenarians Henry Allingham (F8317) and Claude Choules (J60249).

Royal Marines, WRNS and some matelots had different sets of numbers entirely.

Officers came late to the numbers game, the first Service Number being issued, no doubt to much consternation, when computerised pay was first introduced in 1970-71.

For some reason, known probably only to old and bold members of the Writer branch, the first officer's number issued appears to have been C020000 or C020001 – was that given to Admiral of the Fleet Earl Mountbatten, then on the Active List and in receipt of half pay, I wonder?

Were all the preceding 19999 numbers for computer test purposes only or had some crooked pen pusher set up false pay accounts in the names of Drake, Blake, Hawke and their like?

The old story goes that officers and men didn't need numbers in Nelson's day, for they knew each other by name!

I wonder who was Rating Number 1 in 1853 or 1873 and who was Officer Number 1 (20001) some 40 or so years ago?

Who was given the last Service Number issued by the Royal Navy (something like D234567Y, I imagine), and who was given the first naval JPA number 300000001?

It is time for retired Scribes to add to the story and sum up on the countless Official and Service Numbers issued by the Royal Navy to those in a blue suit.

– **Lester May** (September 1967 entry as Junior Assistant Writer Second Class – P103760) Camden Town, London

# 'Shackleton was a great leader'

I WAS saddened to read E C Coleman's letter *Shackleton was 'no hero' (May)*.

I had really thought that Royal Navy prejudice against the Merchant Navy had been long dead and buried.

There were many factual errors, selective references, and malicious gossip in Mr Coleman's letter.

The Shackleton Epic Expedition, which departs in early 2013, has the aim of completing the boat journey from Elephant Island to South Georgia and then completing the crossing to Stromness Whaling Station.

This will be the first time both have been done since Shackleton and his team did it in 1916.

As our Society is one of the sponsors, I have to correct some of Mr Coleman's errors. The first is that this current expedition is not to celebrate Shackleton alone, but all the members of the Endurance expedition, including Lt Worsley and PO Crean, as well as Frank Wild and the others.

Shackleton revered Worsley and Crean, both of whom were vital in the sea crossing in The James Caird lifeboat to rescue the remaining men left on Elephant Island.

Mr Coleman's assertion that Shackleton was not qualified to command a ship is completely fallacious.

Shackleton qualified as a Master Mariner in April 1898, aged 24, but decided in 1914 that Worsley should command the ship Endurance to allow him time to take overall charge of the expedition.

Mr Coleman's unbelievable attacks on Shackleton's leadership qualities are mainly based on the diaries by Marshall, the doctor on the Nimrod expedition of 1908-09, who, when under great physical and emotional stress, did write a number of criticisms of all the others on that expedition including Shackleton, but these comments are more than countered by entries in Wild's diary of the same time.

Shackleton's men always called him 'The Boss' as a term of affection, and this continued long after the expeditions were over.

Most commentators hold Shackleton up as one of the great leaders of all time, including a bestselling book and associated leadership course called *Shackleton's Way* by Margot Morrell, which is currently a big hit in corporate America.

Although the Nimrod expedition never reached the South Pole, it did complete a large number of scientific firsts: they were the first to climb Mount Erebus, they were the first to reach the magnetic South Pole and the fossils they brought back are still of interest today to compare with modern finds.

It was sound leadership that gave Shackleton the moral courage to turn back when only 97 miles from being the first men to reach the Pole and bring back all his team with him alive.

Shackleton did not claim to have never lost a man, but he was



proud that he never lost a man under his direct command.

He was devastated by the loss of three men from the Ross Sea Party on the Endurance expedition but they were over 1,000 miles away from him at the time.

Shackleton has been criticised for not recommending the Polar Medal for four of the party, including McNish, for reasons we do not fully understand, but we know he felt strongly about this.

These were Edwardian times and attitudes were different then. It is not true to say the RN Hydrographer later awarded one to McNish. Although the committee that adjudicates on the award of Polar Medals meets in the Hydrographic Office, only the Sovereign can award the medal. McNish has never received one.

There are too many errors in Mr Coleman's letter to point them all out. They include, for instance, misnaming Crean's pub The Pole Star when it was The South Pole Inn.

Also the assertion that his wife, Emily, "refused to have Shackleton's body sent back to England" after his death in 1922 makes it sound as though she was happy to be rid of him.

This is a massive distortion of the truth. Emily felt it was right that her husband should be laid to rest in South Georgia, a place that meant so much to him.

He lies facing his beloved "White South" and a few months ago, the remains of his trusty second-in-command, Frank Wild, were interred next to him, the whereabouts of his ashes having been researched and found in South Africa by one of our members, Angie Butler.

The original boat, The James Caird, is complete and on display to the public at Dulwich College. The James Caird Society has two lecture/dinners a year at the college discussing the many aspects of Polar exploration and the Antarctic.

– **Admiral Sir James Perowne**, Chairman, The James Caird Society, South Kilworth, Leicestershire

...IT'S quite clear that E C Coleman doesn't like Ernest

# Tandem Taxi's sad end

TONY Hermitage is not on his own on his tale of the Tandem Taxi man (May).

I remember seeing him quite often during the 1950s and 1960s.

But I never used his services. Being 6ft 6ins and weighing 17st 6lbs, I do not think he would have welcomed my trade too much.

But during 1960-61 I was on loan draft to Patrol Headquarters, Portsmouth, and one night we heard over the police net that there had been a collision between the Tandem Taxi and a vehicle.

I think it was on the roundabout at the end of Commercial Road, and he was in a serious condition.

I cannot remember if he had a passenger onboard, or if his injuries were fatal.

It may have been late 1960 or early 1961 (it was 52 years ago) but I know I never saw the Tandem Taxi again.

– **Tug Wilson**, Linkinhorne, Cornwall

# Don't let dyslexia stop you

WELL DONE Leading Steward Anne-lise Davis (*Literacy effort is rewarded*, p34, April) and all those who have accepted the challenge to improve their literacy.

If you feel you suffer from dyslexia, which is often the case with intelligent, logical and creative people confronted with a very illogical language, maybe you'll be encouraged by the experience of my own three children and my wife, who all 'suffered' from the condition.

All four have become successful professionals: a senior nurse, a teacher, a veterinary surgeon and... a Royal Marine!

My father battled with poor literacy. He became an airline captain.

– **Dave 'Tiny' French**, Bath

# Save Deptford Dockyard

THE Deptford Royal Dockyard where Sir Francis Drake was knighted and where many ships such as HMS St Albans 1687 and HMS St Albans 1747 were constructed and launched is as important a part of British naval heritage as Greenwich down the river.

The destruction of historic buildings such as the Tudor Great Storehouse is disgraceful.

The Deptford Royal Dockyard site should be protected and listed as national naval heritage with a symbolic naval commission as HMS Deptford.

Equally the opportunity should be taken to rebuild historic buildings, thus bringing naval heritage and history back to life for present and future generations.

**Robert Lee Shipley**

# Gorblimey titfers

FURTHER to Mike North's letter (March), another aspect of uniform modification was peculiar to the Artificer branches and this was the mutilation of the cap, or 'Goss' in Tiffspeak.

It was a rite of passage that the cap should be so moulded that it resembled those worn by engine drivers.

The process was scientific and complex and could only be achieved on the navy blue cloth variety, that is, before the introduction of the white plastic dinner-plate type.

Famously Her Majesty, when Princess Elizabeth, inspected the Condor Apprentices' guard and band at a parade in Dundee.

She was heard to remark on the

strange headgear worn by those young Tiddy Tiffs.

The 'Goss,' thus moulded, was an efficient item of working headgear (Tiffs considered the beret only suitable for Bootnecks and Basque Separatists).

The practice might have evolved as a desire for identification, having lost their gilt buttons in the 1924 cutbacks.

Whatever the origination, the 'Goss' engendered apoplexy in many commanders who referred to it as the 'Gorblimey Cap.'

It seems that the latest headwear is to be the ubiquitous baseball cap, much favoured by postmen, dustmen and American admirals.

– **F M J Wootton**, Ventnor, Isle of Wight

# Thoroughly round trip

THE May edition included an article about artefacts from the submarine HMS Tactician (page 38). It was suggested that Tactician may have been the first submarine to circumnavigate the world.

That honour actually fell to HMS Thorough, which left Sydney in October 1957 and

arrived at HMS Dolphin on December 16 1957.

Tactician remained in Australia/the Far East until, if my memory serves me correctly, 1961, when she departed Singapore for her return journey to the UK.

– **L F Darby**, Wellington, Somerset

## Opinion

THE latest, massive section of the future HMS Queen Elizabeth was floated out of Portsmouth for Rosyth at the end of May, visible proof of the feats of engineering, design and workmanship that are going into these two mighty carriers.

But for some years, the ships which should have been a cause for national pride and celebration have been blighted by the debate and controversy about which aircraft will be flying from them.

The Government's decision to switch from the Carrier Variant to the Short Take Off Vertical Landing version has now put an end to years of uncertainty, which in itself is great news for the carrier programme.

The other good news is that initial flights from HMS Queen Elizabeth will now start three years earlier than planned. And

as both ships share the same design, the decision provides the potential to run both, thus offering 100 per cent Carrier Strike availability.

It makes the future of the second carrier, the Prince of Wales, much brighter. At one time she was threatened with being mothballed almost as soon as she came out of the shipbuilder's yard.

The aircraft controversy has rumbled for years; now that it is settled we can concentrate on the progress of the two ships.

They are a long-term investment. After all, we do not know what form of aircraft will be flying off them in 2066, but they will provide the nation's Carrier Strike for the next 50 years.

The views expressed in this paper do not necessarily reflect the views of the MOD



# NAVY NEWS

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# CLASSIC JACK

BY TUGS

THAT'S HMS OCEAN - IT'S FULL OF BOOTNECKS - AS YOUR FATHER FOUND OUT - HE FINISHED UP BEING STEWED IN A MESS TIN WITH TWO HEDGEHOGS



## Honour the Ganges boys

DO ANY of your readers recognise themselves in this photograph?

It was taken in the annex of HMS Ganges in July 1962, and shows the lads in the Eagle Mess just before we were moved over into the main establishment.

In those days photo printing was very expensive, so they were quite rare. I find that there are not a lot of pictures taken at Ganges apart from this, which was an official photo, and the ones taken on family days.

I have been back to the old place a few years ago. It's all gone to rack and ruin, it's criminal when you think of all the boys who passed through her and the history behind her.

It's true what they say, nothing stays the same, times were hard in those days but I believe they were better days.

— John Pittock, ex JME, Ganges, Steeton, West Yorkshire

...I SERVED from July 1939 to March 1964, joining HMS Ganges as a Boy II Class (the lowest form of animal life apart from a midshipman).

Many, many boys passing through Ganges did not survive. If only for their benefit, the mast should be

repaired to its former glory.

Many times, having escaped through the surrounding fence at midnight to obtain Woodbines from the slot machine in the only shop in the village, many of us climbed to the button, out of sight of the instructors, to have a crafty 'drag'.

Having joined my first ship, Barham, as still a Boy II Class aged 17, I was in the right place at the right time (ie, the mess deck) due to return to the transmitting station at 1630, many decks down and through many shut, watertight doors for twilight Action Stations.

In company with HMS Queen Elizabeth leading and Valiant bringing up the rear, we got unfinished at 1625 on November 25 1941.

Out of our ship's company of 1,172, 869 were killed, many Ganges boys among them.

At the final memorial service at Westminster Abbey on November 26 2011, only three survivors attended (I was the youngest at 87), but 250 relatives of those lost did so.

At 88 I know what my two service numbers were. But I can't remember where I left the teabags!

— G H Knott, Summer Court, Hythe, Kent

## A little licence on the lapel

I ATTENDED the unveiling of the Destroyer Memorial at Chatham in 2007 and at the reception afterwards I was buttonholed by Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh (pictured right), and the following dialogue took place.

DoE: "I see that you are wearing the Arctic Emblem."

PB: "Yes Sir. Quite illegally!"

DoE: (Sharply) "Why is that?"

PB: "Well sir, your civil servants have ordered us to wear it on the *lapels*. I have refused and I am going to wear it attached to one of my other medals where it should rightly have taken its place as a campaign medal."

DoE — laughed and said "Jolly good show." (I think he

said 'jolly'.)

On hearing that I was an Arctic survivor he enquired about the loss of my ship, HMS Somali, about which very little was ever made public.

HMS Somali was torpedoed in September 1942 just south of Spitzbergen.

She was taken in tow by HMS Ashanti and after 400 miles in the general direction of Iceland, held together by a few rivets, she gave up the ghost and broke in half about 0400 in the middle watch.

The order was given to Abandon Ship — both halves. A hundred men obeyed the order. Nineteen survived and I was one of the lucky ones.



I am now 90 years old but the memories are still vivid.

— Peter Belchamber, retired Chief Engine Room Artificer (steam-driven) Gloucester.

See page 34 for details of the Military Medals' Review — Man Ed



Each month Pussers Rum are offering to courier a bottle of their finest tipple to the writer of our top letter. This month's winner is: Peter Belchamber — we hope with the Duke of Edinburgh's approval...

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If you submit a photograph which you did not take yourself,

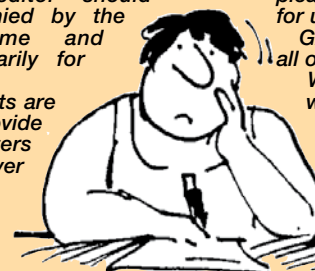
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We do, however, publish many on our website, [www.navynews.co.uk](http://www.navynews.co.uk), accompanied by images.

We look particularly for correspondence which stimulates debate, makes us laugh or raises important issues.

The editor reserves the right to edit your submissions.



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## Strictly BRNC ballroom

THE Quarterdeck of the famous Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth was buzzing when it was turned into a ballroom for one night for its fourth charity version of *Strictly Come Dancing*.

The BRNC Volunteer Band provided the live band music for the evening which saw nine couples take to the floor with a group waltz and then their individual show dances.

The audience were treated to displays of the tango, quickstep, jive, cha-cha-cha, rumba and Charleston – all of which were received with thunderous applause and cheers of encouragement and appreciation.

After the dances and judges' comments the final part of the evening was the ultimate decider – the audience vote. The resounding winners were University of Plymouth BRNC lecturer Dr Paul Rampling, and LPT Issy Molyneux-Jacobs, who impressed with an excellent fast-moving and entertaining jive (pictured above).

To prepare for the event couples received some professional training from Carmen Montero of the Deborah Bond Dance Academy, who then joined the judging panel on the evening of the competition.

Carmen said: "I didn't really know what to expect when I took on this project. I have been delighted to work with such a varied, intelligent group and am thrilled with what all the dancers have achieved".

This was the fourth time the College has held a Strictly event; the evening included a promises auction and saw around £3,000 raised for the RNRMC.

A surprise member of the audience was Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Charles Montgomery, who was on a short visit to the West Country. He thoroughly enjoyed the evening's entertainment which he described as "first-class", adding: "This has been a fun evening for everyone that brings the whole college together. The courage and commitment of the dancers is a wonderful example."

## The man without a van

COLLINGWOOD'S CPO Paul O'Shaughnessy is planning on cycling from HMS Victory in Portsmouth to the Liver Building in Liverpool, along with his friend and fellow Liverpudlian Lt Tim Johnson, to raise money for the RNIB and Cancer Research in July.

However the duo have a problem – the team are without a van which they want to use as a safety vehicle.

If anyone can help with a loan of a van for the challenge, please contact Paul on 01329 227931.

The 300-mile journey will go across country, avoiding major roads, through the South Downs to Shrivenham, then north to the Midlands and finally through Cheshire to Liverpool.

If you would like to sponsor Paul, please visit his webpage at [www.justgiving.com/Paul-O-Shaughnessy0](http://www.justgiving.com/Paul-O-Shaughnessy0)

## Sing a song of Military Wives

THE MILITARY Wives' Choir, with soloist Jenny Abbot, are giving a concert at Dartington Hall, Totnes, Devon, on Saturday June 16 to raise funds for the Poppy Appeal.

Tickets are £22.50 including Pimms, and are available from the Royal British Legion Community Fundraiser on 01392 273111 or mobile 07769671590.

# Marathon efforts by the Navy

THREE oppos from HMS Raleigh were among the 36,000 competitors taking part in the London Marathon in April.

Lieutenants Brett 'Chick' Parkin and Gary Whittles and Band Colour Sergeant (BCSgt) Mark Phillips all live in Torpoint. They trained hard for many months to take part, aiming to raise money for good causes.

Children with Cancer UK was the chosen charity of Lt Parkin. The 40-year-old submariner, who joined the Royal Navy in 1990, was hoping to raise a minimum of £2,000 for the charity which aims to determine the causes, find cures and provide care for children with cancer.

Lt Parkin said: "Completing the marathon is a personal goal for me before my knees say 'no more Lofty'".

"I generally run for fun and have taken part in the Plymouth half marathon on two occasions and the Helensburgh half marathon once.

"I was lucky enough to get my place through the Bond scheme which provides places for charities.

"As a father of four and a grandfather, any charity that supports children is worthwhile.

"My aims for the marathon are to complete the distance and raise as much money for Children with Cancer UK as I can so that they can carry on their work."

Lt Whittles was raising money for the Children's Trust, which provides rehabilitative care to children with multiple disabilities.

This was his first attempt at a full marathon, although he ran two half marathons last year in preparation for London, the first in Afghanistan and the second in Plymouth.

Although both were aimed at fitness he used the opportunities to raise money for the National Autistic Society.

He said: "I'm not a natural athlete but I've been working incredibly hard, not for myself, but to support the Children's Trust.

"I intend to raise in the region of £2,000 for this most worthwhile charity and appreciate all contributions to the cause."

BCSgt Mark Phillips was running in memory of his brother-in-law and fellow musician Band Corporal Andy Thomson, who died of skin cancer in 2008 aged 34.

Andy was the husband of BCSgt Phillips's sister Catherine, who is also a Royal Marines Musician. During the last months of his life Andy was cared for by St Luke's Hospice in Plymouth and the money raised in sponsorship from Mark's marathon effort will be donated to the hospice.

## Dine at CTCRM with C Group

THE end of this month will see a special fundraising Mountbatten Dinner held at CTCRM Lympstone to raise money for charity C Group.

The charity's main aim is to raise awareness and generate practical support for Royal Marines, particularly those injured during operations.

Organisers promise a spectacular evening, steeped in history and tradition, featuring the Royal Marines band, with RM hosts and combat veterans.

Tickets for the evening, on June 30 at CTCRM Lympstone near Exmouth, cost £100 per person and include a three course dinner and champagne reception.

For more information, contact Shirley-Anne Fison on 07966 288978.

The 39-year-old joined the Royal Marines Band Service in 1988 and is an experienced marathon runner. This was BCSgt Phillips's second appearance in the London Marathon, having first completed the race in 2007.

He has also competed in the Cardiff marathon in 2005 and 2006 and has taken part in the Plymouth half marathon on numerous occasions.

Mark said: "The London Marathon is a fantastic event to be part of and I think it's something everyone should consider doing at least once in their lifetime.

"This time I'm hoping to raise as much money as possible for St Luke's Hospice, where the staff carry out a wonderful job in caring and supporting patients and their families."

The three men have each set-up an online giving website for well-wishers to show their support. They can be found at:

Lt Parkin - [www.virginmoneygiving.com/chickparkin](http://www.virginmoneygiving.com/chickparkin)

Lt Whittles - [www.justgiving.com/gary-whittles](http://www.justgiving.com/gary-whittles)

BdCSgt Phillips - [www.virginmoneygiving.com/markphillips23](http://www.virginmoneygiving.com/markphillips23)

■ ALSO taking part in the London marathon was Cdr Peter Hoare, the Commanding Officer of 702 Naval Air Squadron at



RNAS Yeovilton (pictured).

Cdr Hoare, who lives in Thornford, Dorset, was flying the flag for SSAFA as he ran the 26.2 miles from Greenwich to the Mall alongside 38,000 other runners.

He was aiming to raise around £3,000, and is taking part in the event to remind the public of the great work the Armed Forces do and to provide support for forces' families in need.

To donate, please go to <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/PeterHoareSSAFA> or to find out more about SSAFA Forces Help please visit [www.ssafa.org.uk](http://www.ssafa.org.uk).



● Members of Blake Squadron joined with Bristol URNU for the Bath half marathon

## Blake Squadron makes a run for it

THREE cadets from Blake Squadron at Britannia Royal Naval College took part in the Bath half marathon in aid of the RNRMC.

The third of the College's three Squadrons; Blake Squadron has about 130 RN-sponsored undergraduates at either University or Ministry of Defence Hospital Units around the UK.

Surgeon Sub Lieutenant Sean Vanstone, Bursar Jo Peacock and Bursar Rory Force ran as part of the Bristol URNU crew and have so far raised £640.75 of their £1,000 target.

Blake Squadron is composed of Medical Cadets and Foundation Year Doctors, Dental Cadets, University Cadet Entrants, Upper Yardmen (Engineers) and Bursars.

All apart from Bursars, are salaried serving members of the Royal Navy and subject to the same rules and discipline as are the young officers at BRNC.

Bursars remain as civilians, receiving a bursary payment at the beginning of each year whilst at university before then joining the regular service.

All have to join their local University Royal Navy Unit, Royal Naval Reserve or Royal Marine Reserve unit or other service equivalent whilst at university in order to receive basic service training and have regular

military contact throughout their cadetship.

Naturally the cadets within Blake Squadron are spread across the United Kingdom and are supported by a small team within BRNC.

Lt David Wilson oversees the squadron, assisted by Nick Smith of VT Flagship.

Twice a year the profile of Blake Squadron comes to the fore in BRNC when the Bursars' and Medics' Acquaint Course takes place.

This seven-day course sees sponsored cadets fully integrated with the rest of the College and initial naval training.

David explained: "The Sponsored Cadets have various introductions to the aspects and syllabus of training at BRNC covering physical fitness, seamanship, Royal Naval Leadership Academy, parade and academics.

"It's a high profile course and its success relies on full support from all areas of the College, ensuring highest standards are maintained maximising the effectiveness of the cadets in their future RN careers."

To donate, visit their website at: [uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fundraiser-web/fundraiser/showFundraiserProfilePage.action?userUrl=BristolURNU](http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fundraiser-web/fundraiser/showFundraiserProfilePage.action?userUrl=BristolURNU)

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# Sahara slog for CHF runners



● In the sands of the Sahara, two Fleet Air Arm pilots Lt Cdrs James Birchall and André Milne fly the flag for the Navy as they complete the toughest foot race on earth: a 154-mile slog across North Africa, the Marathon des Sables (marathon of the sands)

TWO Naval pilots completed the toughest race on earth – the Marathon of the Sands across the Sahara – to raise thousands of pounds for ill youngsters.

Commando Helicopter Force Lt Cdr James Birchall and André Milne slogged across 154 miles of dunes and rocky hills in North-west Africa in a six-day race.

Over six days, the two Fleet Air Arm pilots – both aged 37 – pounded the desert alongside more than 850 competitors.

The pair, based at RNAS Yeovilton, set out to raise £12,000 for the Children's Trust, which provides care, education and therapy to children with multiple disabilities and complex health needs across the UK.

The pilots, who are both experienced endurance athletes, lined up against competitors from 43 nations and crossed the extremely diverse Moroccan Sahara, touching the edge of the Atlas Mountains.

James and André crossed vast expanses of "beach-like" plains, volcanic rock fields, dried river beds, powdery sand dunes and huge rocky hills known as jebels.

Temperatures frequently topped 45°C (113°F) which meant the runners treasured every drop of the nine-litre daily water ration – particularly during the long stage of 51 miles.

That water ration meant no washing for six days and self-sufficiency demanded the pair carry specialist lightweight food and equipment – and only 1 set of clothes.

As well as raising the maximum possible amount, the two runners

were spurred on by the race's mascot: if the camel at the back of the field passes you, you're pulled from the race.

The camel was far behind the pilots who crossed the finish line after 37 hours (17 hours behind the winner) and were placed a respectable 216th and 217th out of 790 finishers.

"It was spectacular but we had little time to enjoy it," said James. "We were pushing hard, running together to keep our speed as fast as possible."

"You had to keep focused and your mind was constantly busy evaluating your body to identify problems as soon as they developed."

"We frequently drew strength from the huge support we were receiving and for this we can't thank people enough, we never felt alone whilst running."

André added: "The low was the unimaginable number of dunes covered, I managed to empty half a dune out of my left shoe on the final day and have kept some in a tub as a unique reminder to not do the race again!"

The runners did receive a tremendous boost courtesy of news of donations: the two friends have smashed their £12,000 target and are closing in rapidly on £20,000 (you can make a donation at [www.justgiving.com/DesertMarathon2012](http://www.justgiving.com/DesertMarathon2012)).

"No doubt it was tough, but we have been blown away by the public's generosity and are amazed we only have a few more steps to reach our revised target of £20,000," said André.

With the race behind them the two runners are recovering well although strangely non-committal about whether they would do the race again.

## Scotland sees red

HMS DEFENDER hosted the Scottish Poppy Appeal volunteer Robert Laidlaw alongside in Scotstoun to mark the charity's record-breaking 2011 appeal, and Robert's impending retirement.

Poppyscotland raised £2.68 million last year – an increase of 14.7 percent on its results the previous year.

Robert, from Clydebank, is one of many volunteers who are coming up to retirement after years of fund-raising for the charity. His Clydebank collection brought in £50,000 in the last two years alone.

Poppyscotland is looking for new volunteers. To find out more, ring 0141 427 8490, text volunteer to 81400 (standard network rates apply) or email [volunteer@poppyscotland.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@poppyscotland.org.uk)

## Dog do on Warrior

PORTSMOUTH'S HMS Warrior 1860 is the venue for the Hounds for Heroes ball on June 15.

The summer ball is the first major fundraising event for the charity that provides trained assistance dogs to injured and disabled Servicemen and women.

Jenny Hollington, mother of Marine Richard Hollington who died as the result of injuries received in Afghanistan in 2010, has played a key role in organising the event.

She said: "We're looking forward to a wonderful evening, raising the profile of the charity and lots of money for Hounds for Heroes."

To purchase tickets, priced £75, contact Hounds for Heroes on 01730 823118 or go online to [www.houndsforheroes.com](http://www.houndsforheroes.com).

## BFBS big salute

THE British Forces' Broadcasting Service 'BFBS Big Salute' has raised more than £322,000 since it was launched four years ago. The Big Salute is a year-round fundraising campaign which raises money for BLESMA, Blind Veterans UK (formerly St Dunstan's), Combat Stress, Veterans' Aid, and FAB.

If you would like to raise money under the Big Salute umbrella for these five charities, email [bigsalute@bfbs.com](mailto:bigsalute@bfbs.com) and they will promote your event on air.

## Merlin dash

WHILE on their recent overseas deployment, members of RNAS Cudrose's 820 Naval Air Squadron helped to raise funds for Sport Relief by taking on the Sport Relief Mile Challenge.

However it seems that a mile was not enough for certain people, who pushed on for a three mile and six mile race.

Lt Chris Instrell and CPOAET Jules Andrews ended up completing the six-miler with a 200m sprint finish.

The result? A dead heat. And £300 for the sporting challenge charity.

## Muppet race

A MOTLEY crew of characters ranging from Mr Incredible to a pantomime cow gathered on the parade ground of Britannia Royal Naval College to take on a mile run for Sport Relief.

Under the guidance and encouragement of Kermit the Frog (aka LPT Laura Brown) the runners held a short, dynamic warm-up, followed by the mile run with some of the characters taking on the course in three-legged fashion, whilst others skipped or carried a laden stretcher. One group even pretended to swim.

The runners raised nearly £200 for Sport Relief.



## The grand folk of York

THEY marched them up to the end of the pier and they marched them back again...

The grand (probably not really all that old) folk of HMS York set out for a ten-mile charity walk in aid of the Applefields School, one of the ship's affiliated charities.

Twenty-five members of the ship's company set out in full fire-fighting rig with breathing apparatus and fire hoses – and the all-important collecting buckets – to raise funds around Portsmouth.

The idea for the event came from AB(WS) Chantelle Skinner, who visited the school in February during the destroyer's affiliates visit to the city of York.

Moved by the outstanding work that the school does for children with a wide range of special educational needs, Chantelle decided to do something to help.

The rain and strong wind didn't dampen the spirits of the charity walkers, although it was a slightly quiet Gunwharf that gave a warm welcome to the sailors.

Shoppers and staff cheered on the walkers, offering donations,

and were harried by the frantic activity of AB(Sea) Jinxy Jinks as he ran in and out of shops with his collecting bucket.

From Gunwharf the team headed on to Clarence Pier, then Guildhall Square and on to the Historic Dockyard, netting up a total of ten miles as they traversed Portsmouth and Southsea.

In total they managed to collect £570 for Applefields School in York, with more to follow from sponsorship.

Cdr Rex Cox, commanding officer of HMS York, said: "I am extremely proud of members of the ship's company, led by AB Skinner, who took it upon themselves to raise funds for Applefields."

"The ship has a very close relationship with the pupils and staff of the school, and are delighted to have been able to contribute in some small way."

■ And apologies to another Portsmouth fundraiser Robert Haines whose name was incorrect on our May pages.

## Rammers Ormrod on the road again

FORMER Royal Marine Mark 'Rammers' Ormrod was to be seen last month as a proud bearer of the Olympic flame as he carried a golden torch through Plymouth.

He compared the experience to completing the eight-week coast to coast journey across America called the Gumpathon.

And now he admits he's on to his next challenge.

"For some stupid reason, I have agreed to be part of a team who are aiming to run, cycle and hand-cycle the UK coastline – covering just over 3,000 miles and again raising money for military charities," he said.

The team will set off from Plymouth in September, making their way along the south coast, then head northwards along the east coast all the way up to Inverness. From here they will head south along the west coast.

Mark is being joined on the challenge by another former Royal Marine, Dodge Hollis, as well as former US Marine Charles 'Chunks' Padilla, and led by medic Paul Shearsby, who says of himself "as a civilian that has been around the military way of life since the day I was born, I have seen the unique family that is Her Majesty's Forces".

The team are raising money for four military charities: the Royal Marines Association, the Royal British Legion, the British Limbless Ex-Servicemen's Association (BLESMA) and the Semper Fi Fund, which helps members of the US Armed Forces.

Find out more or show your support at [tourdeforces.com](http://tourdeforces.com).

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## New pilot aims for Swordfish

A ROYAL Navy Lynx pilot is looking forward to flying a lumbering veteran aircraft.

Lt Cdr Mark Jameson (*above*) is the newest pilot in the Royal Navy Historic Flight, and while his ultimate ambition is the fabled Fairey Swordfish, he has just passed a more modest milestone.

The 815 NAS pilot has been back at the controls of a de Havilland Chipmunk, completing his first solo in the T10 variant after refresher training with current Swordfish pilot Lt Cdr Glenn Allison, CO of 727 NAS at Yeovilton.

The solo was a nostalgic experience for Mark, who began his flying career in that very aircraft in 1992 while a fledgling pilot at Dartmouth.

Mark will now build up his experience and skills in the Chipmunk and the larger civilian-owned Percival Provost and T6 Harvard before he will be ready to fly the Swordfish.

All being well he should achieve his first Swordfish solo later this year.

# Raleigh in spotlight

THE man at the head of the US Navy's Supply Corps paid a visit to HMS Raleigh to see the facilities used to train RN logisticians.

Rear Admiral Mark Heinrich and his senior team spent two days

in Cornwall at the RN training establishment in Torpoint.

They were briefed on the role of both HMS Raleigh and the Defence Maritime Logistics School (DMLS) in training RN personnel and the way training is evolving.

The visitors, accompanied

by Rear Admiral David Steel, the RN's Chief Naval Logistics Officer, were shown the Heavy Replenishment at Sea (HRAS) facility, currently under construction, which will be used to test new equipment for the Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carriers

and future support shipping.

It will then provide a permanent state-of-the-art training facility to teach RN and RFA personnel how to safely transfer stores and equipment from ship to ship while under way.

Rear Admiral Heinrich and his team also looked round the Fire and Damage Control Schools, where they were briefed on the roles Logistics personnel play at sea in the event of an emergency.

Their visit ended with a tour of ex-minehunter HMS Brecon which, as well as being the seamanship training vessel, is also used to give chefs and stewards their first taste of working in confined galley and dining facilities at sea.

Cdr Heber Ackland, Commandant of the DMLS, said: "It was a great pleasure to host the head of the US Navy Supply Corps and members of his staff at HMS Raleigh."

"Our links with the US Navy remain as strong as ever and are vitally important in gleaning information on operating the sorts of large vessels that the RN will be introducing into service over the next few years."

"We have a US Navy Supply Officer joining the staff here in June and we look forward to developing our links with the US Navy Supply School at Rhode Island in the future."

The visit formed part of a week-long visit to the UK by Rear Admiral Heinrich and his team.

Although based at Raleigh, the DMLS is part of the wider Defence College of Logistics and Personnel Administration.

As well as providing RN training, the DMLS also trains members of the RNR, RFA and Sea Cadet Corps.

## Submariner is top chef

A CHEF from HMS Turbulent has been chosen as the Armed Services Caterer of the Year for 2011 at an awards dinner in London.

Chef Martyn Lewis received his award from Gp Capt Andy Killey, the Defence Fuel and Food Services Team Leader, at the Cost Sector Catering Awards Dinner.

This is the third occasion the Naval Service has won this award, sponsored by Purple Foodservice Solutions, and the second year in a row, following on from LCH Tame of HMS Mersey in 2010.

The citation notes Martyn's contribution to Turbulent's ten-month deployment to the Indian Ocean.

"He commanded the food preparation compartments throughout as the Galley Manager, consistently producing imaginative high-calibre nutritious menus within the constraints of the financial limitations for both the ship's company... and for high-profile diplomatic functions," the citation declared, describing him as "an exceptional chef who is highly-respected by his peers, line managers and command alike for the relentless contribution to the morale of the ship's company in the most challenging of catering environments."

## Freedom for Phil

THE Senior Naval Officer on board HMS Duncan has been granted the Freedom of the City of London in recognition of the links he has forged between his ship and the Worshipful Company of Cooks.

Cdr Phil Game's ship, the sixth and final Type 45 destroyer, is being completed on the Clyde and is due to start sea trials this summer.



Picture: LA(Phot) Gary Weatherston

## Thanks for their support

NAVAL Secretary Rear Admiral David Steel has held his annual Commendation Ceremony at the National Museum of the Royal Navy to show his appreciation for outstanding work by members of the Navy Command HQ Personnel Division.

Those taking part in the ceremony (*pictured from left above with Rear Admiral Steel*) were:

Lt Cdr Martin Shepherd, for his work in the Fleet Air Arm Manpower Sustainability Team; Lt Cdr Mike Dineen, for his work in the Fleet Executive Team; CPO(Wtr) Elaine Hockenhull, for her work in Naval Legal Services; Rita Rees, for her work in

Fleet Promotions Team; and Cdr Liz Walmsley, for her work in the Fleet Equality and Diversity Team.

Also receiving a Naval Secretary's Commendation, but not in the picture as she is currently on an operational tour in Afghanistan, was LWtr Angela Bevan for her work in the Portsmouth Ratings Career Management Cell.

As Naval Secretary, Rear Admiral Steel also has the role of Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff (Personnel), and that division is responsible for ensuring enough trained and motivated people are available for Royal Navy and Royal Marines operations around the world.

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# Sailors celebrate May Day

TRAINEE sailors from HMS Raleigh helped celebrate the May Bank Holiday in Cornwall when they took part in the annual Black Prince Flower Boat procession.

The ten trainee divers took turns to carry the flower-decorated model boat – the Black Prince itself – shoulder-high through the villages of Millbrook, Kingsand and Cawsand.

Accompanied by Lt Micky Flitcroft, the naval party headed a procession which included town criers, dancers, musicians, children and villagers.

The festival dates back to the 19th century, and although it died out around 50 years ago it was revived in 1986.

Sailors have taken part for a number of years, and Lt Flitcroft said: “We were very pleased to be asked to lead the procession once again.”

“The sailors are always very well received and enjoy getting involved in this tradition.”

At the end of the day the Black Prince, which is housed throughout the year at HMS Raleigh, is launched into the sea from Cawsand beach.

# Officer retires

A FALKLANDS veteran was dined out from the Royal Navy at a mess dinner marking the 30th anniversary of the conflict.

Cdr Mark Leaning has handed over the reins of the RN Flight Safety Centre at RNAS Yeovilton to Cdr Ian Fitter.

In a varied career the officer, a Qualified Helicopter Instructor, has *inter alia* flown the Sea King Mk 2, 5 and 6, the Lynx 3/3GMS and served as the Flight Commander of HMS Ambuscade and HMS Liverpool.

He began his Naval career as a ship’s diver in HMS Plymouth, and had not long been in the Service when he found himself in action in the South Atlantic.

Cdr Leaning now intends to focus his attention on rearing his equine prodigy ‘Little Ron’.

# Helicopters on agenda

SENIOR military personnel and leading figures from industry attended a two-day conference at RNAS Yeovilton where they discussed the future MOD Helicopter Strategy and the Defence Rotary Wing Capability study.

Opening the event, and delivering the keynote speech, was Peter Luff, Minister for Defence Equipment, Support and Technology, who said: “Rotary power is an absolutely critical component of combat power.”

“That’s why the Defence Rotary Wing Capability Study is so important.”

An important element of the event was the chance for the Fleet Air Arm to discuss their role and requirements with the MOD and industry

# Junglies remember Ben

ON a wet spring day a group of Commando Aircrewmen from RNAS Yeovilton, both serving and retired, laid a poppy wreath at the memorial stone to PO Kevin “Ben” Casey.

The ceremony marked the 30th anniversary of the accident that saw a Sea King from 846 Naval Air Squadron crash into the South Atlantic, killing 26-year-old Ben, who became the first British casualty of Operation Corporate.

The Sea King had been moving stores between HMS Hermes and other ships in the Task Force sent to retake the Falkland Islands.

On this sortie there was just one pilot with Ben, and it was as they were returning to Hermes to pick up a second pilot that the aircraft was lost in deteriorating weather.

Attending the event was retired WO Alf Tupper and still-serving WO John Sheldon, who both served

# Echoes across the Oceans



● David Luscombe Elliot presents a picture of the second HMS Ocean to Capt Andrew Betton, Commanding Officer of the current Ocean

A PICTURE of the second warship to bear the name HMS Ocean has been presented to the current ship by a descendant of a former commanding officer.

David Luscombe Elliot and his wife, Jane, from Abingdon, visited Ocean in Devonport to present a picture of the ship’s namesake.

That Ocean – a 98-gun second rate of the mid-Victorian era – has a special resonance in David’s family as his four-times great-grandfather, Vice Admiral Richard Arthur, was her CO.

David also presented a copy of the admiral’s portrait to current CO Capt Andrew Betton.

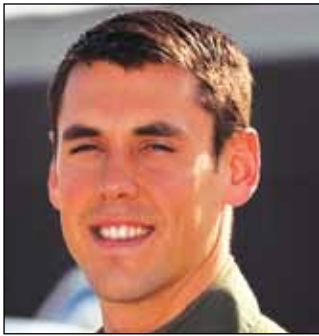
In return, Capt Betton gave David a photo of the current Ocean

conducting flying operations off Libya and a ship’s crest before he and Jane were given a guided tour.

Capt Betton said: “The Royal Navy has always valued the historic nature of ship names and it was therefore a privilege to host the relative of one of my predecessors onboard the current HMS Ocean.”

David said: “It was a proud moment for me to visit the present HMS Ocean given my family links and I really appreciated the opportunity to look around the ship which I found absolutely fascinating.”

“The ship’s crest and photograph will take pride of place on my wall at home.”



# Squadron welcomes a jet-setter

TODAY the Grob Tutor, then the Hawk and after that the Super Hornet – there is still plenty of variety in the life of a Royal Navy fast-jet pilot.

727 Naval Air Squadron has a new staff pilot on its books after squadron CO Lt Cdr Glenn Allison welcomed Lt Daley Simpson (above) to Yeovilton.

Lt Simpson has been assigned to 727 after a period of refresher training on the Tutor, to maintain currency in fixed-wing flying techniques prior to fast jet training on the Hawk T2 at RAF Valley.

His role with the squadron is to provide air experience flying to URNU cadets, potential officers and serving members of the Royal Navy, such as trainee air traffic controllers and air engineers.

After training at RAF Valley, Lt Simpson is destined for the USA, where he will gain front-line experience on the US Navy’s F-18 Super Hornet – an exchange programme to prepare the officer and his colleagues for the introduction of the F-35 Lightning II.

# Collingwood salute

SERVICE personnel at HMS Collingwood paid their respects to those who died in the South Atlantic as they saluted the Falklands Memorial Stone during a commemorative service and march-past.

The CO of Collingwood and the Maritime Warfare School, Cdre Mike Mansergh, laid a wreath on behalf of personnel at the Fareham training base.



commissioning cake.

So what’s going on in it? Well, the dragon has escaped from its lair (top right in picture below) and burst forth on to the cake, to the despair of one matelot.

Some people might have been content with that, but not Jon.

“There needed to be a bit more going on, so that people can see a story,” he explains.

So, top left... Three sailors proudly hold the (graffiti-strewn) name board aloft made by the ship’s chippy, there are a couple of stokers messing around with hoses, and a medic’s at the ready at the back just in case things turn a bit messy...

The main cake, with chefs all over it adding the finishing touches and the captain saluting, completes the story.

The rich fruit cake itself – the 190-strong ship’s company are still working their way through it now, and yes, it does taste as good as it looks... – weighed in at 40kg (88lb, or more than six stone!)

It’s covered in regal (roll-out) and royal icing and everything, including the little characters, is edible.

“I’m glad the ceremony went well for the ship and that I could play a small part in that process,” says the senior rating. “My next challenge: HMS Queen Elizabeth. Bring it on!”



# A prize to savour...

A JUNIOR rating serving in HMS Echo has been awarded the Hambone Trophy, the Navy’s top prize for her achievements in hydrographic and meteorological training.

AB(HM) Sally Owen was presented with the trophy – a model sextant, said to resemble a ham bone – while Devonport-based Echo took a short break from her survey mission to visit Mumbai in India.

It was created by the Survey Ships’ Association in memory of Cdr John Mackay, and is presented to the AB who received the highest score in basic training at the Hydrographic and Meteorological Training School at HMS Drake.

Once aboard it was presented to the young sailor by Echo’s out-going Commanding Officer Cdr Mike O’Sullivan.

“I really enjoyed my training at the Hydrographic and Meteorological School in Devonport and found the course to be interesting but challenging. I’m very pleased to be awarded this trophy,” said Sally.

# Watchkeepers tour destroyer

A PARTY of volunteers from the Gosport National Coastwatch Institution station paid a visit to HMS York in Portsmouth Naval Base.

The group was hosted by the destroyer’s Deputy Logistics Officer Lt Allan Hall – who is also the son-in-law of the newly-appointed Coastwatch station secretary Alan Port.

The watchkeepers were grateful for their comprehensive tour of the ship and the hospitality of the members of the ship’s company.

# Wealth of experience



Picture: LA(Phot) Dave Sterratt

IF YOU have a problem, if no-one else can help, then maybe you should call on 771 Naval Air Squadron.

For the Cornish squadron has not one, not two, three or even four, but five Senior Observers – possibly the most experienced quintet of rescuers in a single place serving together concurrently.

Between them the five – (pictured, from left) Lt Cdr Lee Kennington, Lt Cdr Chris ‘Damage’ Canning, Lt Cdr Andy Drodge, Lt Cdr Paul Robertson and Lt Cdr Florry Ford – have 1,233 search and rescue call-outs to their name, plus 18,300 flying hours and, collectively, 115 years’ service.

Lt Cdr Kennington, the Ace of Clubs’ current Senior Observer, felt the presence of such an experienced and widely-respected group of professional aviators serving in 771 at the same time was probably a record.

Further investigation revealed an even greater number of Fleet Air Arm executive appointment-holders in the Cudrose squadron: three former commanding officers, four senior pilots and two more senior observers.

“It is a fantastic fact and one that I feel will not be exceeded,” said Lt Cdr Martin Shepherd, 771’s CO.

“Now there is a challenge for other FAA squadrons to try to beat.

“I am extremely fortunate to be so well served by this highly-professional cadre, who utilise their vast experience and knowledge to maintaining the extremely high professional standards of which the squadron can be justifiably proud.”





## Lonely grave is tidied up

EARLIER this year, the New Zealand Defence Force was contacted by a member of the public concerned about the dilapidated state of a sailor's grave, writes *WOEWS Roger Sheehan*.

The Tauranga unit of HMNZS Ngapona (Naval Reserve) was tasked to carry out urgent maintenance on the grave, which lies on the east coast of the Coromandel Peninsula, in a location aptly named 'Sailors Grave'.

Most unit personnel were unaware that a Navy sailor's grave existed on the coast, even though we had travelled through the area many times.

With the aid of photos and Internet research we began to build a picture of what would be required – a simple task, but with some considerations to be taken into account – we would be working on a grave, so due respect would need to be observed, and the grave was protected as an historic site, so everything had to be left in the same order as we found it.

The grave is of 22-year-old AB William Sampson, of HMS Tortoise, and lies just off the beach in Te Karo Bay, 8km north of Taurua.

In 1842 HMS Tortoise was collecting kauri spars from a timber station in Te Karo Bay to ship to the UK for masts.

The ship's records state that on May 6, while transferring stores, a jolly boat capsized in the surf, drowning William, an unmarried fisherman, born in Devonport, who had joined the ship in Hobart in February 1842.

AB Sampson was buried opposite the spot where he drowned; the grave sits under a stand of pohutukawa trees and is believed to be the oldest known sailor's grave in New Zealand.

It also lends its name to a nearby access road to the area.

Maintained by the Hamilton family for many years, responsibility was handed over to the RNZN in 1968 and remains our responsibility to this day.

Work on the grave had not been done for some time and urgent work was needed to bring it up to an acceptable standard.

A team of four (Lt Garth Mathieson RNZNVR, WOEWS Roger Sheehan, CPOMT(P) Paul Brennan and POMTO Graeme Frost) spent a weekend clearing the grave of debris and general rubbish, washing down the area and scrubbing the picket fence, sanding the pickets and then painting the posts and pickets.

The actual grave itself is in very good condition because it has a concrete pad over the grave, but the fence and pickets required some work, and with its exposure to sea air, maintenance will be needed more often.

All of us who undertook this task felt very privileged and honoured to have been involved.

This sailor lies thousands of miles from home.

He was part of the Naval family, doing a job, and was killed in the course of those duties.

On May 6 2012 it was 170 years since he died.

Our unit will be looking to continue maintaining the site for years to come.

## Woking pays tribute to St George

WOKING branch have held their annual St George's Day Parade in Old Woking.

The parade marched through Church Street to St Peter's Church led by the standards of the various local veterans' associations and their comrades.

Organisers were particularly pleased to see representatives of the Sea Cadets and Army Cadets in the procession.

In all some 15 standards were paraded,

including the national standards of the Fleet Air Arm Association, the Korean Veterans Association and the Merchant Navy Association.

The standards were lined up in a guard of honour outside the Norman church in bright spring sunshine to welcome the Mayor of Woking, Cllr Ken Howard, and local MP Jonathan Lord.

The service was led by honorary branch

chaplain the Rev Barry Grimster, and the Bisley Ladies Choir led the singing for a large congregation.

Cllr Howard recited the Robert Browning poem *Home-Thoughts, from Abroad*, with its famous opening line 'Oh, to be in England Now that April's there.'

After the service the standards were inspected by the Mayor and Mr Lord, who congratulated the bearers on a fine turn-out.

## ANZAC sacrifice honoured

SERVICE personnel from the UK, Australia and New Zealand held a poignant service to commemorate the bravery and sacrifice made by the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC), who fought at Gallipoli during World War 1.

The ceremony was held aboard Devonport-based assault ship HMS Bulwark whilst on a multinational exercise off the north west coast of Scotland hours after she had deployed her boats for an amphibious landing.

The Antipodean personnel, who were embarked as part of the planning and execution staff for the exercise, hosted the traditional ANZAC Day dawn service, which began as the sun rose above the horizon at 4.45am.

Following an introduction and a number of readings, prayers were led by Bulwark's chaplain, the Rev Dave Roissetter.

The poem *In Flanders Fields* was read by S/Lt 'Kurt' Story RNZN, an exchange Officer serving in Bulwark.

The *Last Post* was sounded and a one-minute silence observed, the end of which was marked by the sounding of *Reveille*.

S/Lt Story said: "Having just conducted an amphibious landing similar to the assaults on Gallipoli, it is important for us to pause and reflect on the courage and sacrifice of our countrymen.

"In our modern world it is difficult to imagine what they went through in the defence of our freedom, but it is something that is worthy of remembering and sets an example to today's Servicemen who are still risking their lives on a daily basis."

After completing Exercise Joint Warrior, Bulwark will be off Weymouth and Portland for the bulk of the summer, supporting Dorset Police, acting as a floating command centre for the security mission surrounding the Olympic and Paralympic sailing events.

## Reunion for Hermes

THE HMS Hermes Association held their annual reunion over the Easter weekend at the Royal Maritime Club in Portsmouth.

Guests of honour were Rear Admiral Dick Melly and Capt John Lock, both of whom served aboard the aircraft carrier during the Falklands Conflict.

The weekend also commemorated the sinking of the ninth HMS Hermes by the Japanese in April 1942 off Trincomalee, and those gathered were delighted to be able to welcome two survivors of the sinking, S/Ms Stan Curtis and Mike McLoughlin.

The association is always keen to welcome new members – it is open to all ranks and ratings who have served in either Hermes (1919-1942 or 1959-86) or family members; last year the daughter of a crew member who died in 1942 joined.

For more information see [www.hmshermes.org.uk](http://www.hmshermes.org.uk)

# Conference looks at options for future

OPTIONS over membership of an international group and over the arrangements for future conferences are on the agenda at this year's gathering in Newcastle.

Three National Council motions and three branch motions are due to be considered at the Conference, held at the Assembly Rooms on June 9 and hosted by

Tyne branch.

National Council motion 1 is concerned with rule changes over the auditing of area and branch accounts.

Motions 2a and 2b address the RNA's membership of the International Maritime Confederation (IMC) and offer shipmates two options.

2a suggests that the Association

leaves the IMC as soon as current membership expires.

But 2b offers an alternative – "that, noting progress made by the International Maritime Confederation, the decision as to whether the Association should remain a member of the Confederation, or leave it, be postponed until Conference 2013."



● TCA Committee members (left to right) Bill Pollington, Peter Harrison, Stuart Johnson, Chairman John Soanes, Sam Cook and Peter Down in Lower Barrakka Gardens, Valletta

## Ton veterans visit Malta

A GROUP of some 50 members and wives of the Ton Class Association (TCA) visited Malta in April to take part in ceremonies to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the award of the George Cross to the island.

Clearly the Tons themselves were not there at that time – although a couple of members were.

However, Ton vessels were stationed in Malta for much of the 1950s and 60s – two squadrons, 104 (Blackfoot) and 108 up to 1959, when the Blackfoots left for Singapore, while 108, later known as 7 MSS, soldiered on until 1969.

Ton sailors, not surprisingly, have many close ties to the islands and to the people of Malta – and the party received a warm welcome.

They were received by the Prime Minister of Malta, Lawrence Gonzi, and met the Duke of Gloucester, who was visiting the island as part of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations – arranged by

the British High Commissioner, Louise Stanton.

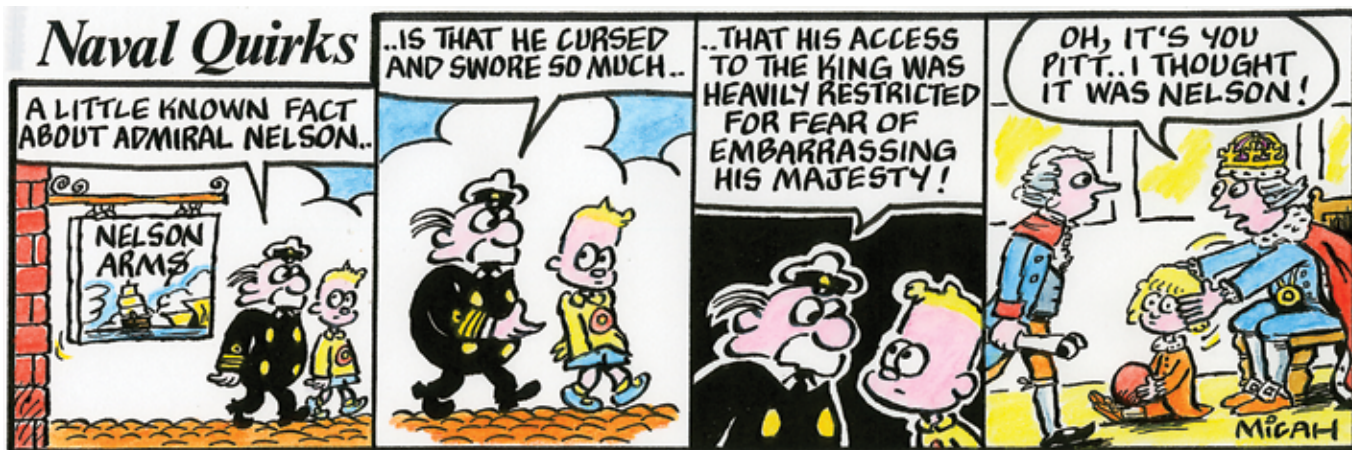
The visitors renewed friendships with branches of the RNA, RBL and TCA on the island, and some strolled down the Gut – only to find that their favourite watering holes are no more.

Members laid wreaths in formal parades at the Sliema War Memorial, RN Cemetery Kalkara and the RNA Memorial in Pieta.

And one highlight was being invited to march down Republic Street, formerly Kingsway, as part of the GC Parade, led by the guards and bands of the Malta Armed Forces and Malta Police.

TCA members were accompanied on parade by groups from the Ganges Association and Overseas Malta Association.

In St George's Square they witnessed a dramatic *son et lumière* presentation of the blitz in Malta and a re-enactment of the ceremony in which the George Cross had been awarded.



● S/M George Lester, chairman of Dagenham branch, presents a £500 cheque to S/Lt (SCC) Sarah Butcher, CO of Hornchurch and Upminster Sea Cadet unit. S/M George, accompanied by branch secretary S/M David Billett and treasurer S/M Bob O'Keeffe, were also invited to see what the youngsters achieved during training at their TS Hurricane HQ, where they are taught by a dedicated group of volunteers





## Derby celebrates anniversary

DERBYSHIRE Submariners have celebrated the tenth anniversary of the granting of the Freedom of the City of Derby to the Silent Service.

Shipmates saw £300 raised for the City of Derby Sea Cadet unit over the weekend, while crew members from the city's affiliated submarine, HMS Ambush, cycled from Barrow-in-Furness to Dolphin Ward of the Derbyshire Children's Hospital, raising some £1,750 in the process.

Admiral Sir Trevor Soar and his wife Lady Soar – who launched Ambush – and Cdre Jake Moores, Deputy Rear Admiral Submarines, attended the celebrations, as did crewmen from Ambush and Trident missile boat HMS Vanguard.

Other highlights of the weekend included the launch of a special Submariner Ale at the Brunswick Inn, a coffee morning well-attended by members of the ex-Service associations in the area, and visits to Rolls-Royce and TS Kenya, the Sea Cadet headquarters.

At various events the submariners were supported by a number of mayors, councillors and other civic dignitaries – for which the shipmates expressed their thanks.

## Funds for cadets

AN after-dinner raffle at the AGM and dinner of the Royal Naval Communications Association raised £400, which has been donated to the local unit of the Sea Cadet Corps.

The unit will use the funds to buy kayaks.

The Association always donates the proceeds from its raffles to either the Corps or the RNLI.

# Wartime hero pays visit to Trenchant

TO RECEIVE the Dolphins is one of the proudest moments in any submariner's career – a sign they have joined a very special band of brothers.

To receive them from one of the doyens of the Silent Service is the icing on the proverbial cake.

And so it was that a legendary figure from a legendary submarine presented the Service's 'badge of honour' to newly-qualified deeps aboard HMS Trenchant in Devonport.

Now aged 92 and living in the United States, Lt Cdr Robert Read navigated the previous Trenchant seven decades ago, when the T-class diesel submarine proved to be the scourge of the Axis powers in the Far East.

She sank a German submarine, U-859 – despatched to the region to support Berlin's Japanese allies – in the Malacca Strait, launched 'chariots' (human torpedoes) which sank the Japanese cargo ship Sumatra Maru in Phuket Harbour and, most famously, sank the 13,000-ton Ashagara in the Java Sea in June 1945.

That action not only eliminated the heavy cruiser from the Japanese order of battle, it also prevented the 1,600 troops she was carrying reaching Singapore.

Lt Cdr Read is the last surviving member of that Trenchant's wardroom.

He attended the launch of the current Trafalgar-class boat in Barrow in 1986 and her commissioning three years later.

He has followed the progress

of the hunter-killer nuclear submarine ever since – most recently to congratulate the boat for emerging from her latest refit and wish her crew well when they deployed again.

That prompted an invite from the boat – an invitation accepted by the veteran submariner, who was asked to perform the honour of presenting Dolphins.

The badge is only presented to those who have completed their submarine qualifying assessment, showing an understanding of all aspects of the boat and its systems, irrespective of whether they are chefs, writers or nuclear engineers, so that they can react to any situation aboard in an instant.

After presenting Dolphins to Trenchant's crew, Lt Cdr Read told the new joiners to the elite group to embrace their fledgling careers as submariners:

"To say I am overwhelmed is quite an understatement," he said.

"To you chaps I was proud to present your Dolphins.

"In no way are you to think they are under-valued because I, who once served with Methuselah, presented them to you rather than someone with tonnes of gold braid on his arm.

"I know you realise that and I know you will wear them with pride and honour.

"Now that you are members of the trade you are members of the finest submarine service in the world.

"I wish you all good luck in the future and I know that you and your shipmates will uphold the good name of Trenchant."

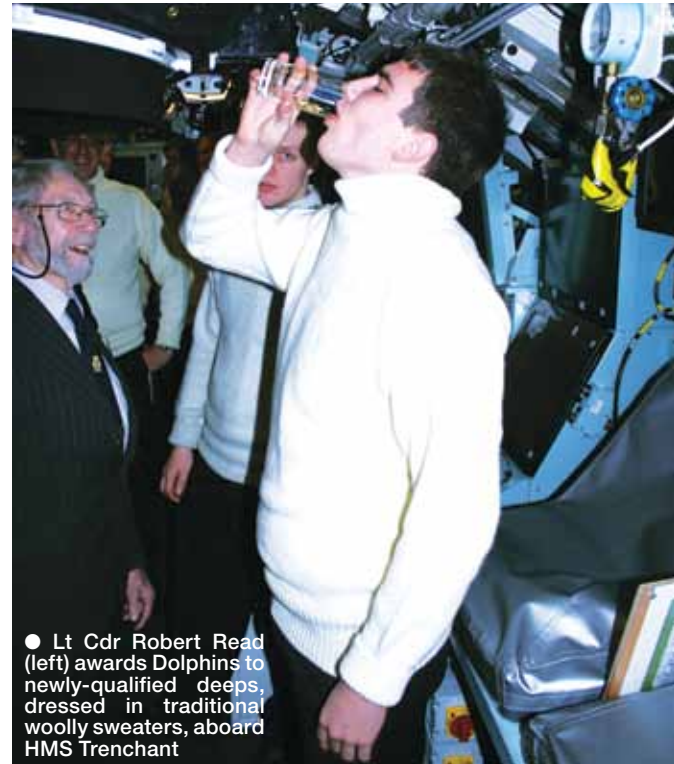
He continued: "God forbid, if push comes to shove I know that you will add honour and glory such as we acquired in 1944 and 1945.

"I wish you all the best of luck in the future, God speed and smooth sailing."

He added: "On a personal note, I stand here, very humbly in awe and admiration.

"I am proud to be able to say, I salute you Trenchant. Thank you."

In return Trenchant's CO Cdr Irvine Lindsay presented the veteran with Dolphins as



● Lt Cdr Robert Read (left) awards Dolphins to newly-qualified deeps, dressed in traditional woolly sweaters, aboard HMS Trenchant

a memento – the badge was introduced post-war, long after Lt Cdr Read left the service.

The former navigator was given a tour of the 5,000-tonne boat, and found the equipment aboard and the 'creature comforts' enjoyed by today's submariners "mind-boggling", although he felt, despite 70 years of progress, that today's Trenchant is still "rather crowded".

The veteran also tried his first 'cheesy hammy eggy' – cheese on toast with ham and egg on top, a favourite with today's deeps.

Rationing and wartime shortages meant eggs, bacon and ham were often regarded as treats.

And the retired officer decided it was "something I might try again on my own. It looks easy."

Having been weaned on classic war films featuring Sir John Mills, Clark Gable and Burt Lancaster,

Trenchant's Executive Officer Lt Cdr Jeff Fillmore said to meet a true Silent Service legend easily put Hollywood escapism in the shade.

"It is often said that you should be wary of meeting your heroes as they don't always measure up in real life. Anyone who says that has not met Robert Read," he said.

"Meeting a man who battled in a war that encompassed the entire globe, a man who helped sink the Japanese cruiser Ashigira and defeat a German U-boat, fills any submariner with a sense of awe.

"That sense is surpassed instantly on meeting the man who tells these stories of daring and heroism in such a way that they seem to be a normal order of business.

"Maybe that is what makes him such a hero and that is why Robert Read and his shipmates are such an inspiration to submariners today."

## Gates are created

FUNDS raised by the East of Scotland branch of the Royal Marines Association have been converted into a pair of galvanised metal gates at the Falklands Memorial Gardens in Barry Buddon, near the mouth of the River Tay.

The gates were fabricated and erected by former Royal Marine 'Bungy' Williams.

As the branch had hoped, the new gates were in place, ready for the 30th anniversary of the Falklands Conflict and the 45 Cdo Falklands reunion.

Shipmates' thanks go to 'Bungy' for all his efforts.

Before the branch's AGM in early April a group of young Scouts and Beavers handed over a cheque for £75, which they had raised for Help for Heroes and asked the branch to forward to the charity.

The branch's Easter dance went very well, with a fair number of Easter bonnets on parade.

## Freedom of borough

ST HELEN'S branch has been presented with the Freedom of the Borough of St Helens on Merseyside.

The honour was bestowed by the Mayor and councillors during a ceremony in the town's parish church, at which the Mayor presented the Freedom Scroll to branch secretary S/M Trevor Howard.

The ceremony was followed by a parade through the town, and a reception was held at the Town Hall.

## Falklands contingent

ANY Falklands veterans who wish to march in a group at the National Armed Forces Day event in Plymouth this month should contact Mark Davis at [markdavis5@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:markdavis5@blueyonder.co.uk)

Mark is a member of the South Atlantic Medal Association 1982 – SAMA82 – and has been asked to co-ordinate the Falklands veterans' participation.

More than 60 have been in touch to date, but Mark would like to see more than 100 there, whether they are members of SAMA82 or not.

## £50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our April edition (right) was River-class minesweeper HMS Dovey, which became the Bangladesh warship BNS Surovi.

Mr M Franklin, of Fareham, wins the £50 prize for providing the correct answer.

This month's mystery ship, above, saw war service as a destroyer but was converted to an anti-submarine frigate in the mid-1950s.

Launched at Southampton in mid-October 1943, she won Arctic and Norway battle honours in 1945, and was finally scrapped on the Clyde in 1970.

(1) What was her name, and (2) at what yard was she converted in the 1950s?

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News,



HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH. Coupons giving the correct answer will go into a prize draw to establish a winner. Closing date for entries is July 16 2012. More than one entry can be submitted but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winner will be announced in our August edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.

### MYSTERY PICTURE 208

Name .....

Address .....

My answers (1) .....

(2) .....

## Alec takes a fall for charity

A MEMBER of the Medway Towns Submariners Association has thrown himself out of an aeroplane to celebrate his 80th birthday – and raised thousands of pounds for a hospice in the process.

S/M Alec Giles served in the Andrew from 1947 to 1957, including stints in destroyers HMS Chevron and HMS Cheviot.

He also spent 30 years with Kent Police, followed by ten years as an enforcement officer with the Trading Standards Department.

Alec has also been a volunteer with the EllenorLions Hospices, Northfleet, for the past 15 years.

"To celebrate reaching the grand young age of 80 last October I treated myself to a tandem Sky Dive," said S/M Alec.

"Although it was with the intention of getting a few mates to sponsor me in aid of the hospice, it was suggested that a very mini marathon would be more up my street.

"It obviously wasn't appreciated that I'm something of a lazy sod where exercise is concerned.

"Now what could be less effort than tumbling out of a plane two miles up?

"All right, the first mile would be freefall at 120mph, but I was assured that a qualified skydiver would hopefully clip himself to my harness and remember to eventually open the chute.

"Then, after a few stomach-



churning spirals just to show off his expertise, it would be a gentle glide down to Mother Earth for a large tot of Pusser's from my hip flask and the knowledge that I'd collected something for a good cause.

"Well, the jump took place at Headcorn Airfield Kent on Friday April 20.

"Helped by the magnificent support from the Medway Submariners Association, the Gravesend RNA and other associations that I've conned into letting me join, my optimistic target of £1,000 has been well and truly shattered.

"To date the amount collected stands at over £3,000 – well done

and thanks to all those generous people concerned.

"Although the jump has been made, my website will remain open for the next couple of months.

"Should anyone wish to donate they are welcome to do so on [www.virginmoneygiving.com/AlecGiles](http://www.virginmoneygiving.com/AlecGiles)



# Run up to summer with the NFF

THE SUMMER edition of Homeport is hot off the press, with this issue featuring the NFF annual review of business and trends, writes Jane Williams of NFF.

'A Year in the Life' is our eight-page pull-out summary of what Royal Navy and Royal Marines families have been talking to us about.

It is the NFF's opportunity to provide a snapshot summary of the last year's activity; who we have been talking to and about what on behalf of the whole Naval Service family.

If you don't have a copy posted directly to you free of charge, please get in touch and we will add you to the list: [editor@nff.org.uk](mailto:editor@nff.org.uk)

## Service Families Accommodation - Update

The new enhanced application process for Service Families Accommodation (SFA) has launched - after testing and re-testing the systems, Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) launched the enhanced e-1132 on May 29 2012.

As with all new systems all the foreseeable glitches have been ironed-out, but this is a very ambitious project and DIO request that anyone picking up issues or problems please provide feedback so that the service can be amended and improved.

Feedback is welcome via NFF, e-mail: [admin@NFF.org.uk](mailto:admin@NFF.org.uk), we will pass these comments directly onto the system managers.

DIO set out its plan in 2011

to give all entitled personnel an enhanced SFA system, the key aims of which included giving families accurate and timely information, the opportunity to express a preference for particular properties and give users the opportunity to use a more automated system to book appointments:

The Department is seeking to improve the SFA allocation process by:

- Introducing an automated, self-preference system;

- Centralising allocation services at a single Housing Allocations Service Centre based at two locations, Aldershot and Thetford.

The automated, self preference system will provide greater transparency in the allocation process, and will allow Service Personnel and their families to:

- View online 'estate agent' details of available properties (description of property, together with floor plans, with images of front and rear elevations, garden, kitchen, bathroom, lounge and primary bedroom) that match their entitlement linked to their new duty station;

- Express their preferences from the available properties which match their entitlement;

- Receive all documentation electronically reducing the time taken to receive an SFA offer; and

- Self book all appointments relating to their move, once an allocation has been made.

Not every property has a 'photo portfolio' as yet, but as the system beds in more information will be

gathered and uploaded, this will take time and DIO anticipate that the system will be updated over the next few years.

The allocation of SFA will remain with the DIO staff at the Housing Allocation Service Centre (HASC).

The recommendation is that all applications, wherever possible, are made via the automated e-1132 system, enabling applicants to track the application on-line.

The JSP 464 guidelines remain the same, some key points to highlight:

- Completed applications should receive an offer of SFA within 15 working days of application.

- If no SFA is available by 'required by date' then a Certificate of Non-Availability will be issued and the process for Substitute Service Families Accommodation (SSFA) will commence.

- Please check with the Unit Personnel Office (UPO) and JSP752 for Allowances.

JSP 464 is available via the Intranet and via MOD Website.

The DIO website has been updated to include area maps, e-mail address and a host of data to assist families living in SFA: [www.mod.co.uk/DIO](http://www.mod.co.uk/DIO)

Please note that if you are calling the HASC using a mobile then the local number of 01904 418000 may be a better option as 'inclusive minutes' or local number charges may apply.

The Navy Command Headquarters' accommodation policy staff, who will continue closely monitoring the SFA

allocations service provided by DIO Ops Accommodation as it transitions from the Housing Information Centres (HICs) to the Housing Allocations Service Centre (HASC), have asked us for feedback from Naval Service families of their recent experiences of the HASC - both good and bad.

Whilst HASC telephone answering times have generally improved in recent weeks, we are still receiving reports of long waiting times and, more worryingly, reduced levels of service when compared to those delivered previously by the staff at the HICs.

We would like to hear of your experiences of the HASC by email to: [admin@nff.org.uk](mailto:admin@nff.org.uk). We will ensure that your concerns and comments are passed on.

The Welsh Government published its Package of Support for the Armed Forces Community in Wales in May.

The document is available in full via [www.cymru.gov.uk](http://www.cymru.gov.uk).

It is estimated that at least a quarter of a million members of the Armed Forces Community including Serving Personnel, Reservists and Cadets as well as their families and ex-Service personnel live in Wales.

The document sets out the specific policies that the Welsh Government plans to implement in the coming year and beyond in areas that are devolved.

The Welsh Government Package of Support for the Armed Forces Community in Wales should be read in conjunction with the UK



Armed Forces Covenant: Today and Tomorrow, which sets the UK Government's overall intent for supporting the Armed Forces Community.

The NFF sits on the Expert Group panel on the Needs of the Armed Forces Community in Wales. Do you have any comments or experiences? If so please get in touch: [admin@nff.org.uk](mailto:admin@nff.org.uk)

**Tranche 2 redundancy** announcements are due on June 12. The NFF website has a

dedicated section for Redundancy, for all the latest information please go to: [www.nff.org.uk](http://www.nff.org.uk)

Your feedback and experiences form the basis of our discussions, to get in touch with the NFF:

Telephone 02392 654374.  
E-mail: [admin@nff.org.uk](mailto:admin@nff.org.uk).  
Write:  
Castaway House,  
311 Twyford Avenue,  
Portsmouth,  
Hampshire,  
PO2 8RN.

## TWO-SIX

# Fab volunteers sought for FAB

FAMILIES' Activity Breaks (FAB) is looking for volunteers to support their efforts in providing bereaved military families with children with one-week activity holidays in Coverack and Whitby.

The aim is to give families the opportunity to spend quality time together and with others who understand what they are going through.

FAB volunteers are at the heart of this - getting involved, giving encouragement, or simply sitting and talking.

Volunteers are carefully chosen from across the military and MOD, past and present. Volunteering can be emotionally and physically demanding, but always rewarding.

Daily activities include a range of challenges from horse-riding

to climbing, kayaking to abseiling. The environment is carefully managed to be adventurous, yet safe, and encourage the children to interact and develop self-confidence, while having fun.

Although these breaks are not intended to be bereavement holidays, each volunteer is interviewed, CRB checked and, if they are suitable, will then attend a two-day training seminar which covers basic bereavement techniques and other necessary skills.

This year's FAB camps will take place over July and August. If you would like to volunteer for one of the camps, you can find out more by contacting WO2 Lou O'Connell at [FABVolunteerCoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:FABVolunteerCoordinator@gmail.com) or going online to [www.fabcamps.org.uk](http://www.fabcamps.org.uk).



The Royal Navy's Response Force Task Group is

**THE NATION'S ONLY HIGH READINESS MILITARY INTERVENTION FORCE.**

It is capable of deploying and sustaining the UK's military forces where they are needed around the globe.



# Cards to carry

INFORMATION cards are available to promote the Navy's message of 'Protecting our nation's interest'.

These are given out by members of the Royal Navy Presentation Team at events to members of the public.

If someone within your unit might need this material to allow for greater understanding about why the Royal Navy is vitally important to the UK's security and prosperity in the 21st century, visit the RN Message House on the RN intranet to find out more.

# Navy features at Stonewall conference

CONTINUING to demonstrate that the Naval Service (NS) is an all-inclusive employer of choice, Cdre Rupert Wallace, the NS Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender (LGBT) Advocate, along with members of the NCHQ Diversity & Inclusion Policy Staff and the NS LGBT Forum attended the annual Stonewall Annual Workplace Conference in London in April.

Stonewall is a professional lobbying group and through partnerships with organisations outside Parliament, it continues to ensure the rights and needs of lesbians, gay men and bisexuals are addressed in the wider community.

The conference gave 530 delegates from every sector of Britain's economy a chance to hear from speakers including the Home Secretary and Sport Wales chair Laura McAllister.

As a keynote speaker, the Home Secretary Theresa May said businesses could not afford to ignore the £70 billion-strong lesbian, gay and bisexual market, as she set out the 'business case for equality'.

The NS has continued to develop its strong relationship with Stonewall, from being the first of the military to join the Diversity Champions programme in 2005.

Diversity and Inclusion is one of the areas which has been improved greatly over recent years, and the NS now has a growing and active LGBT Forum and support network ([nsigbt@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:nsigbt@tiscali.co.uk)).

Attending the event with colleagues from the Army and RAF, Cdre Wallace and the team were able to take part in

training sessions which covered subjects such as: mentoring for LGBT personnel, creating transformational change through senior leadership, the importance of role models and network groups.

Attendance at such events allows the NS to share and discuss best practice; it gives the organisation one-to-one advice from Stonewall's Workplace team and the chance to network with hundreds of high profile employers.

This in turn will allow the NS to develop non-discriminatory personnel policies and to support the needs of LGBT personnel.

Cdr Chris New, SO1 Diversity & Inclusion in NCHQ, said: "Some of the best performing businesses in the country were testifying that a diverse workforce, if managed well, will improve operational effectiveness."

"The NS seeks to follow this example by recruiting the best people from across the widest talent pool, retaining them through good leadership, including them fully into the workforce, and building cohesive teams which can deliver the required operational effect."

Stonewall Director of Workplace Colleen Humphrey said: "Diversity is vital for businesses to succeed, particularly when the economic climate is tough."

"Britain's 1.7 million lesbian, gay and bisexual staff look for employers who do more than just 'tolerate' them."

"Organisations attending today's Workplace Conference send a clear message to gay staff and potential recruits that they respect their contribution and talent."

## Defence training for all

A REMINDER to the men and women of the Royal Navy that Civil Service Learning (CSL) is not just for civil servants but is available to all Service personnel who have a requirement for business and management training.

CSL delivers a variety of

courses at all levels to meet generic business and management training needs across government.

It also includes courses on problem-solving, leadership and commercial awareness. The CSL portal is at [civilservicelearning.civilservice.gov.uk](http://civilservicelearning.civilservice.gov.uk).

## Watch out for TwoSix

THE latest edition of *TwoSix.tv* features the First Sea Lord's annual message, redundancy and resettlement information, and a Paralympics hopeful.

The DVD has been aligned with the Personnel Support Brief to provide an enhanced package for sharing information.

If you want to get your message out through these pages or the *TwoSix.tv* DVD, please contact:

- Pauline Aquilina: 9621 85984

- WO1 Russ Billings: 93832 5081

Pauline Aquilina is also the first point of contact for the RN Facebook site.





## Comedy has serious point

A BRAND new animated video has hit screens across the nation to raise awareness of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme, the Minister for Defence Personnel, Welfare and Veterans Andrew Robathan has announced.

The humorous online video, based on a *Toy Story* theme, features the popular Armed Forces action figures undertaking a routine patrol that doesn't quite go according to plan.

This video raises awareness of the financial support available to those injured as a result of service in a fun and engaging way.

The new and innovative approach has proven highly popular during test screening and it is hoped that this will be a better way of communicating with young Armed Forces personnel.

The three-minute animated film was developed in partnership with and funded by the Royal British Legion and the ex-Service mental health charity Combat Stress.

The Minister Mr Robathan said: "This important compensation scheme deals with some of the most serious consequences likely to be encountered by our service personnel."

"As a former Army Officer I know our brave personnel often face such situations with great humour."

"The video has already been shown to injured servicemen and women at Headley Court who have given very positive feedback."

■ To view the video visit [www.mod.uk/afcs](http://www.mod.uk/afcs) and follow the links or find out more on Galaxy 17-2012.

## Where to look

### GALAXY MESSAGES

Galaxy 13-2012: Armed Forces Covenant – Improving access to web based services for the Naval Service.

Galaxy 14-2012: Future Joint Strike Fighter Capability

### DEFENCE INTERNAL BRIEFS (DIBS)

27/12: The Defence Budget and Transforming Defence: Announcement that the defence budget is now in balance and also publishing 'Defence in a Changing World'.

26/12: Carrier Strike Programme & Britain's future Carrier Strike Capability: Announcement of significant changes to the Carrier-Strike programme and the decisions that have driven the approach to the way in which Britain's future Carrier Strike capability will be delivered.

25/12: How reduction of 500 British Forces personnel in Afghanistan will be achieved: Announcement by SoS how the UK Armed Forces are going to achieve a reduction of 500 personnel by the end of 2012.

DEFENCE INSTRUCTIONS AND NOTICES 2012 DIN 01-104: OJAR/SJAR Recommendations for Instructional Duties/Key Positions in Training Establishments.

2012 DIN 01-110: Naval Service Redundancy Programme – Appeals Procedure.

ROYAL NAVY TEMPORARY MEMORANDA RNTM 086-12: The Divisional Structure and the role of the senior rating as a divisional officer.

RNTM 087-12: Diversity and Inclusion in the Naval Service.

RNTM 089-12: External Off Duty Employment including Business Appointments during Service

RNTM 090-12: Electrical Damage Control – use of field pack packs as DC L Part BDR Bags

RNTM 092-12: Recruiting for the RN Family Services Branch and the Royal Marines Welfare.

RNTM 093-12: Learn to fly RNFSA Training Week 10-14 Sep 12

RNTM 094-12: Unit maintenance management system (UMMS) – Reporting incidents using the Single Point of Contact (SPOC)

RNTM 096-12: BRd 9465 Fleet Naval Nuclear and Radiological Control Manual Chapter 42

RNTM 097-12: Instructions for booking accommodation at the Fleet Accommodation Centre (Devonport)

RNTM 098-12: Sanitary Waste Disposal Arrangements for RN and RFA Ships

RNTM 099-12: Primary Healthcare Specialist Nurse

RNTM 101-12: Incident Board Markings

RNTM 102-12: Marine Engineering General Service Simulator Based Operator Qualification – Dates for Summer Term 2012.

RNTM 103-12: Geographic Squad Pooling

RNTM 104-12: Cap Tallies for JR Squadron Personnel.

RNTM 105-12: Voluntary Separated Service Waivers to NCHQ.

RNTM 106-12: Update on Status of BR8374 (Officer Training Regulations).

RNTM 107-12: Incident Reporting Procedure for the Navy Command Estate.

RNTM 108-12: Discharge regulations affecting ratings and other ranks – updated advice on requests for prior approval to submit non-standard early termination applications.

RNTM 109-12: RN and RM Boat chart use policy statement.



● Candidates for commando and anti-submarine warfare aircrewmen are being actively sought by the NPT(X) team

Picture: PO(Phot) Mez Merrill

# The X-stream team

**WELCOME to Drafty's Corner sponsored by the Naval Personnel Team (Warfare) (or NPT(X) for short).**

Based in West Battery, Whale Island, NPT(X) primarily provides career management (CM) for all Warfare Branch Senior Rates, and for some Junior Rates.

The recently renamed Career Management Cells (CMCs) in each of the Base Ports manage the vast majority of Warfare Junior Rates.

In addition, NPT(X) provides the strategic Warfare Branch requirement management aspects.

The main challenges currently facing NPT(X) Ratings Career Management are:

**Manning balance.** The RN is now close to 100 per cent manned and as a result, this limits our ability to offer ECs, extensions of service (EOS) and FTRS, as these would increase our overall numbers.

Notwithstanding the SDRS announcements, the promotion and EC boards' cycle, however, will continue as normal.

**Augmentation.** There is no uplift in numbers (liability) to provide people to fill Op Tours. This means that each fill will result in a gap elsewhere.

We try to spread this impact, but as we rely heavily on volunteers, we cannot always control where the gaps will fall.

It should be noted that the Op Tour requirement is always changing, and we endeavour to keep all personnel informed of such changes, which are invariably at short notice.

If you are interested in an Op Tour, please contact your CM.

**Operational Pinchpoints (OPPs).** There are a number of OPPs within NPT(X), especially within the SEA spec, LACs and LS/PO WS(AWW) and (UW).

Each OPP group is examined closely and will have several measures in place to resolve or at least ease the situation; invariably these need time to take effect.

Members of OPPs (by main trade/rate groups) are always encouraged to apply for extensions of service if they are eligible.

**Promotion Candidates.** A number of OPPs result from a shortfall in candidate numbers at promotion boards.

In some cases this is due to the lack of the necessary competences as outlined in BR3 (formerly BR1066), with RNFT being the main culprit.



## Drafty's corner

It is essential that individuals take ownership of their JPA records, and check that they have the correct competences awarded to coincide with their Common Reporting Date.

OPS checks have also been a common failing, but an announcement of changes to OPS checks is expected shortly, so watch this space.

**Aircrewman Training.** Both ASW and CDO are actively recruiting for suitable candidates, BR3 states the pre-grading and sideways entry criteria for these branches.

Both cadres are undergoing aircraft transitions to either an updated aircraft or in the case of the CDO Aircrewman a new aircraft type.

These specialisations offer a high potential for future promotion at all levels.

**Warfare Branch.** Removal of 12-month sea service requirement. Following a review of Warfare Promotion Boards held in 2011 and a requirement to increase the number of potential candidates to meet the promotion numbers for 2012, the need for ABs to have completed 12 months sea service is formally removed as a pre-selection/pre-promotion criteria with the exception of AB(D) and AB(HM)(M).

The requirement for a 12-months sea service competency for warfare LHs and above remains as pre-promotion selection criteria.

BR3 will be amended at the next change to reflect this amendment. RNTM 080/12 refers.

**General points – you can help yourself to help us:**

**JPA.** Make sure that JPA

reflects your true and realistic preferences.

CMs make their assignment decisions in order to meet the needs of the Service and balanced against the professional and personal aspirations of the individual, as contained in JPA.

If JPA does not reflect your current preferences, then you may have to live with the consequences.

CMs can date track back, so changing your preferences once an AO has been raised does not work!

Your preferences should also reflect reality – if the majority of your eligible (Spec/Rate) posts are in Portsmouth, then an area to avoid of 'Portsmouth' is likely to result in disappointment.

**SJAR.** The Comments box on the SJAR creates a permanent record and is viewed by the promotion board.

Comments to your 1RO such as "thanks mate a good report but could you change promotion prospects from High to Excp" are not beneficial – neither is providing a re-write of your RO's comments.

**Assignment cycle.** Be aware of your likely sea/shore rotation – it should not come as a surprise if your SAV date is due and you get assigned back to sea!

The default value is 36 months sea/18 months shore, but this will vary by main trade and rate.

If in doubt, check with your CM and manage your and your family's expectations accordingly.

Your Future Availability Date (FAD, formerly ERD) will, where possible, best reflect your CM's target date, but it is advisory only, and circumstances do change.

Successful promotion candidates should expect to go straight to sea on completion of the necessary courses in your new rate.

Remember to check that you receive the necessary Sea Service competence when due.

This article necessarily highlights the problem areas, yet for the majority it is business as usual.

Whilst the SDRS announcement will already have happened, it will take some time for the options and impacts to be fully assessed and completed.

Timely information will be released via the appropriate internal IC channels.

In the meantime, keep your JPA up to date and maximise your career development and promotion opportunities.



# 1SL flies his flag in Portsmouth

Portsmouth is the official home of the First Sea Lord, the head of the Royal Navy, whose flag now flies from his new headquarters at HMS Excellent, on Whale Island.

The change of headquarters, the consequence of initiatives following the Strategic Defence and Security Review, will vest more responsibility and power in the Navy Command Headquarters.

Admiral Stanhope said the challenge would be to maintain the Royal Navy's outputs with fewer staff, but it could be achieved by adopting new ways of working.

"To use an Olympic analogy, I feel strongly that it is my responsibility to ignite the torch of change," he told his assembled staff in Leach Building, in HMS Excellent.

Whilst the First Sea Lord's flag now flies from the quarterdeck to signify that Portsmouth is his new headquarters, the responsibilities of the appointment will also continue to demand that he works from London.

Two major and related announcements were made at the end of May which should be read in full.

One is the Secretary of State's statement about balancing the Defence budget and the future equipment programme, which can be found in **Galaxy 15-2012 1SL Message on Defence in a Changing World – The Royal Naval Element**, and the other is the announcement about the Joint Strike Fighter (**Galaxy 14-2012 Future Joint Strike Fighter capability**).

Galaxy 15 gives details of the department's affordable, fully-funded equipment programme and Galaxy 14 confirms the choice of the Short Take Off Vertical Landing aircraft for the future carriers.

To summarise, the principal maritime components of the equipment programme include:

**Surface Flotilla**  
■ Completion of the two Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers; both with ski-ramps, in the STOVL configuration.

■ Completion of the six Type 45 Destroyers;

■ Design and development of the Type 26 Global Combat Ship (replacement for the Type 23)

■ Construction and delivery of four new MARS (Maritime Afloat Reach and Sustainability) Fleet tankers.

■ Outright purchase of the

three River Class ships (which are currently leased.)

**Submarines and Deterrent :**  
■ Completion of the remaining six Astute Class attack submarines.

■ Requirement to replace the Vanguard class ballistic missile submarines, (subject to a decision to be taken in the next Parliament)

■ The ongoing costs of the strategic weapon system;

■ A small amount of money at the end of the decade allocated to the requirement to scope a potential future underwater capability to replace Astute.

**Air and aviation**

■ Increasing investment in the F35B JSF, with plans to start flight trials with STOVL JSF from HMS Queen Elizabeth from 2018.

■ Completion of the Wildcat programme replacing existing Lynx helicopters, with separate variants for the Navy and Army (62 in total).

■ Planned transfer of the Merlin MK3 Fleet to the Commander Helicopter Force to deliver medium lift in support of Littoral Manoeuvre.

The MOD has budgeted to spend around £160 billion on equipment, IT systems and support over the next ten years and of that more than 40 per cent will be spent on the Naval Service Programmes.

There are no plans for further manpower reductions, either RN or civilian, than those previously announced.

Balancing the books requires a transformation of the MOD into one which is smaller but more professional, with more modern and innovative ways of doing business.

A key feature of this is to devolve responsibility to the Service Chiefs to manage their budgets. As Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, the First Sea Lord, told his staff at his new headquarters in Portsmouth, he will be held personally accountable for managing the budget and keeping within spending limits.

The Admiral said the Navy Command Review, an integral part of Defence Transformation, would require changes in working patterns to increase efficiency and reduce costs.

However, he assured his staff that three key things must and would not change – the Royal Navy's ethos, its fighting spirit, and its teamwork, both operationally at sea but also ashore.





● The government has announced a review on the award of medals

# A matter of medals

THE Government is looking for input from serving sailors and Royal Marines – as well as veterans – as it reviews campaign medals for the Forces.

Prime Minister David Cameron has asked senior diplomat Sir John Holmes to look into the rules and regulations for issuing medals for major campaigns.

THE review of military medals is taking place to study whether the rules and principles of awarding campaign decorations need to be changed.

The review, which was announced by the Prime Minister at the end of April, aims to consult widely with interested parties, including serving men and women and veterans, before publishing its findings later this year.

The review is being led by the veteran diplomat Sir John, a former ambassador to Paris and Lisbon as well as the UN's Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Co-ordinator.

One of the aspects Sir John will look at is the 'five

years' rule' – a long-standing policy that no new medal can be introduced for events that happened more than five years ago, nor can an individual act be recognised more than five years later.

The principal scope of the review is to look at campaign decorations, not gallantry awards or Long Service and Good Conduct Medals.

Although he will not be making recommendations on specific campaigns, Sir John will be able to consider how the existing policy has affected previous campaign service medals – which has already given hope to some Arctic veterans that they might finally be honoured with a medal.

But the review is equally concerned with future policy, and the team is keen to canvass opinions, so if you wish to comment, please contact:

Medals Review Team, Cabinet Office, Room 2.23, 26 Whitehall, London SW1A 2WH,  
Tel: 020 7276 1237/1311, or email [medalsreview@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:medalsreview@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk)



# Flag honour for friend of Navy

IN THE great cabin of Britain's greatest warship, one of the Navy's most long-standing supporters signed the visitors' book as his burgee was raised for the first time.

The newly-designed flag was hoisted aboard HMS Victory to mark an honorary title bestowed upon Sir Donald Gosling in April by the Queen.

Sir Donald, who joined the Royal Navy in the latter stages of World War 2 and served in the Mediterranean aboard HMS Leander, became one of the great post-war entrepreneurs in the fledgling world of car parks, now holds the office of Vice Admiral to the United Kingdom – as well as the honorary rank of Rear Admiral.

The Vice Admiral office is an honorary title generally held by a senior Royal Navy officer. The holder is the official deputy to the Lord High Admiral – another honorary title most recently held, until last year, by the Queen until she bestowed it on the Duke of Edinburgh for his 90th birthday.

Her Majesty presented Sir Donald with the letters patent and a newly-designed burgee at a private ceremony at Windsor Castle last month attended by Fleet Commander Admiral George Zambellas, the previous holder of the title, and the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope.

He was joined aboard the 250-year-old man o' war for the burgee raising by Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Charles Montgomery, whose flagship HMS Victory is.

# Search for singers for St Ann's

DR Liz Le Grove, organist and director of music at St Ann's Church in Portsmouth Naval base is on the search for singing talent.

Sopranos, altos, tenors and basses are all wanted to perform with the choir at the Naval church.

Music varies from different periods and styles, ranging from Renaissance to recent compositions.

To find out more, contact Dr Le Grove on 023 9272 6177 or [lizlegrove@btinternet.com](mailto:lizlegrove@btinternet.com).

# 1972 1982 1992 2002 THE TIME OF YOUR LIVES

We flick back through the pages of Navy News to see which stories were drawing attention in past decades...



● HMS Ariadne fires a broadside in 1992

## June 1972

THE £10 million project to rebuild HMS Raleigh paused for an historic moment to allow Princess Anne to bury the building plans in a time capsule underneath the foundation stone.

A container holding a copy of plans of the building, plus coins, a newspaper (the paper doesn't record whether it was Navy News) and a short biography of the Princess with a photo of her receiving the 1972 Sportswoman of the Year Award were all interred for posterity.

The training establishment was undergoing a complete rebuild to replace the old hutted accommodation that had been in use for 30 years.

## June 1982

A SHOT of light relief was injected into Portsmouth Dockyard's efforts to prepare ships for the Falklands when Capt Euan Maclean, the production manager, replied to a letter from the CO of HMS Victory, Lt Cdr Charles Addis.

Lt Cdr Addis had requested five dozen four-and-a-half inch diameter metal spheres, representing 12lb shot, to make up the ready-use outfit in HMS Victory.

Capt Maclean wrote in reply: "While I note the keenness to embark your outfit of ammunition – clearly in order to sail south and join the Fleet – I think it is only fair to point out that defects in your propulsion system are such that you are unlikely to be an effective fighting unit much before 1990."

## June 1992

HMS Ariadne had the distinction of being the last RN ship to fire a broadside when she blasted her twin 4.5 guns during a families' sea day, shortly before her paying-off.

As the last of the Leander Class frigates to be built, she was also the last steam-propelled ship, the last Gun Leander, and the last to fire the Limbo mortar.

Ariadne steamed more than half a million miles during her naval service, including a complete circumnavigation of the globe.

She became a familiar ship to hundreds of Young Officers from Dartmouth, where she spent her last three years of service as a training ship.

## June 2002

HMS Monmouth's missing black flag was treated to a night out in Edinburgh in the company of comedian Jim Davidson.

The 'phantom flag-napper,' who used Navy News as his intermediary to publish updates, took it along to the Festival Theatre and sent the paper a photograph of Jim holding it, along with a mysterious masked man.

Meanwhile, the circle was believed to be closing around the criminals. HMS Liverpool had sailed from Rosyth, so the finger of suspicion was pointing towards HMS Invincible and HM submarines Sceptre and Spartan.



# NAVY NEWS



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# Trophy lives



PRIOR to World War I, many European nations were actually monarchies, with their various kings and queens being related to one another.

This state of affairs had arisen partly as a result of Her Majesty Queen Victoria having actively encouraged inter-marriage between the Royal families; she believed – and hoped – that this inter-relationship would help deter war between the European countries.

In June 1908, the Royal Yacht Victoria and Albert with King Edward VII onboard transited the Kiel Canal en route to Russia; on leaving the Canal and entering the Baltic she was met by Prince Henry of Prussia where King Edward was invited to review the German High Sea Fleet, which had returned from manoeuvres in the North Sea.

With the review completed, the Royal Yacht resumed her voyage to the Russian port of Reval (on the Gulf of Finland); she was escorted by two armoured cruisers, HM Ships Achilles and Minotaur, and four destroyers.

One of the purposes of the visit was to allow His Majesty to meet one of his cousins, Tsar Nicholas II of all the Russias.

While at Reval the Victoria and Albert and the Russian Imperial Yacht Standart were protected by the six British ships together with Russian cruisers and destroyers; security was at a high state and the movement of vessels after sunset in the Reval roads was strictly controlled by the local authorities.

The Russian Government – the Duma – largely welcomed

the visit as it was hoped that, in addition to the friendship between the two monarchs, the diplomatic and trading ties between their own nation and Great Britain would be strengthened.

On Monday June 8 the Tsar was invited onboard HMS Minotaur by King Edward VII and, while onboard, he was granted the Honorary Rank of Admiral of the Fleet.

In return for this honour, the Tsar presented the ship with what is now **Trophy No 7105** – a large, heavily decorated urn in Russian silver, with roubles inset on both the body of the urn and its lid.

The inscription on the base records the details of its presentation and reads: “Presented to the Officers of HMS MINOTAUR by HIM Tsar Nicholas II of Russia, on the occasion of his hoisting his flag in this ship on being made an Admiral of the Fleet in the British Navy. Reval, 10th June 1908.”

Sadly Queen Victoria's vision of a (possibly British regulated) peaceful Europe was not to be realised.

Great Britain (under King George V) and Germany (under Kaiser Wilhelm, a cousin to the King) went to war on August 4 1914, a conflict which eventually spread around almost the entire world.

Russia was also a participating nation in the conflict but the Tsar also had to contend with serious internal problems which led to his abdicating in February 1917.

Imprisoned by the Bolshevik rebels at Yekaterinburg, he and his family were murdered there on July 17 1918.

## Deaths

Lt **Brian Saxby**. FAA. Served 1942-46. Completed basic training Air Mech(L) at Duke, Gosling, Vincent and RAF Melksham; passing top of course he was recommended for flight training at Waxwing, Daedalus and Vincent. Travelling by troopship Aquitania to New York he arrived in Ontario 1943 for flying, bombing and gunnery training; he returned to Macaw on board RMS Empress of India in 1944 to continue Multi-engine training and received his Commission. Posted to Godwit (758 NAS), Goldcrest (762 NAS) and back to Godwit for advanced instrument flying before joining Khedive. 1945 he flew from Vairi (742 NAS) Coimbatore (Sular) Southern India then returned in 1946 to Merlin (782 NAS) and Daedalus when 782 NAS was on detachment forming a ferry service to Oberpfaffenhofen Air depot, Munich to return 'lease' aircraft to the USA. He flew the Oxford, Beaufort, Beaufighter, Wellington, Expeditor UC45F and Stinson Reliant, Dominie DH 89 and after retirement joined the Friends of RNAS Yeovilton, Daedalus branch. Fleet Air Arm Association and TAG Association. April 18. Aged 88.

Lt **Cdr Alex Macdonald**. Was a midshipman on board King George V Battleship when it sank the Bismarck during WW2 and served in Cheviot 1958. Worked for the Ministry of Defence in the 60s and received an MBE in 1967 for his services. HMS Cheviot Association. April 8.

Lt **Cdr (SCC) Valerie Barron RNR**. Joined the WRNR 1962 and qualified as a Writer. In 1967 she became an adult volunteer for the Girls Nautical Training Contingent (GNTC) finally attaining the rank of Second Officer, commanding Southampton, Chancellors Ford and Salisbury units and later appointed Southern Area GNTC Officer. After an absence to bring up her children she rejoined the SCC (the GNTC by then had been absorbed into the SCC) and retired in 2003. Brittany April 8. Aged 69.

**George Bullock**. PO Tel(S). Served 1949-61 in Ganges, Corunna, Royal Charlotte, Afrikander (Cape Town Radio), Mercury and Lochinvar. Transferred to South African Navy 1961 serving time before returning to UK. HMS Ganges Association. April 16.

**Tommy 'Gus' Harris**. AB Gunner. Served 1947-55 on the China Station and Korean War (1951-54). HMS Cossack Association. April 2. Aged 82.

**Ronald 'Ron' Vitty**. Served in Friendship, Revenge, Orwell and Tyne. Royal Naval Engineer Association. April 24. Aged 85.

**Peter Bowyer**. Ldg Chef. Served 1950-57 in Korea (1951-53) also Morecambe Bay. HMS Morecambe Bay Association. April 15. Aged 79.

**Mary Shean (née Golding) WRNS**. Served WW2. Widow of the late Lt Cdr RANVR Max Shean DSO\*. Wrens Association Western Australia branch. May 2 in Perth. Aged 89.

**John 'Ned' Garvie**. PO UC1/CPO TASI. Served 1952-76 in Theseus, Surprise, Hardy, St Brides Bay, Brocklesby, Llandaff, Rothsay, Blackwood, Nubian, Loch Fada (last Commission 66/67), Plymouth and Gurkha; also Ganges, Vernon, Raleigh, Osprey and Pembroke. HMS Loch Fada F390 Association. February 8. Aged 75.

**Arthur Larvin**. Able Seaman. Served 1942-47 aboard London, Russian convoys and Eastern Fleet. April. Aged 87.

**ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION**  
S/Lt Cyril 'Bill' N Moody. FAA. Wartime RAF pilot Canada transferred to Fleet Air Arm. Night-time Flying Instructor RNAS Godwit (Shropshire). Cheshunt branch. March 15. Aged 90.

**John Lawes**. Former soldier REME. Associate member Cheshunt branch. March. Aged 78.

**Stephen Rushworth**. ERA. Served WW2 aboard Suffolk during the sink the Bismarck battle. Skipton & District RNA. April 17. Aged 94.

**Michael Gregory**. Associate member Beccles branch. April 12. Aged 78.

**Esme Ketteridge (née Smith)**. Leading Wren Air Mechanic. Served 1943-46 at Daedalus, Ringtail and Nightjar. Founder member and secretary of Norwich branch for 22 years. April 4. Aged 89.

**Capt Alastair Raeburn Robertson RNR**. Joined Clyde Division RNRV March 1951 as probationary Stores Assistant (victualling) and began his National Service in July. Passed Board for Upper Yardman spent four months at the Supply School, Wetherby passing out as Midshipman (S) RNRV. Posted to Portland, Montclare in Rothsay then spent some time with submarines; in 1952 he was sent to assist when the Princess Victoria sank in the Irish Sea. Final appointment was to Perseus ferrying planes from Norfolk, Virginia and acting as host ship for VIPs for the Spithead Coronation Review. Transferred back to Clyde Division RNRV and served in Vanguard, Belfast and Devonshire. Appointed Senior RNR Supply Officer whilst

## Assignments

Cdr Nicholas J Wheeler to be CO of HMS Astute from August 28.

Lt Simon Shaw as CO of HMS Exploit from April 22.

Lt Andrew S Fletcher to be CO of HMS Ranger from July 31.

## Competitions

Congratulations to the winners of the **Yeovilton Air Day** competition. The winners, listed below, each won a pair of tickets to the event on **June 23**:

Mr D Connolly, Plymouth;  
Mike Lynn, Farnborough;  
Mike Norrhead, Hayling Island;  
Mark O'Halloran, Burnham on Sea;  
Mr J Gibson, Sutton Coldfield.

And more congratulations to the winners of the **Royal Marines Mission Afghanistan and Royal Navy Caribbean Patrol** DVD competition in April:  
Malcolm Hall, Tonbridge;  
Sid Myers, Plymouth;  
Philip Cooter, Camberley;  
Trevor Preston, Rye;  
Robert Fowles, Canterbury;  
Mr R W Long, Taunton;  
Malcolm Yates, Wednesfield;  
David Thompson, Weston-Super-Mare;  
Penny Thorne, Stubbington;  
Mark O'Halloran, Burnham on Sea.

serving in Clyde and Tay Division RNR. Retired 1979. City of Inverness RNA. April 17. Aged 78.

**Ken Woolley**. Ldg Seaman. Served 1948-55 in Victorious, Mermad and Scorpion. Secretary and Welfare Officer for many years and Life member of Birmingham Central branch. April. Aged 81.

**Mrs 'Mick' Blades**. A supporter of Lincoln branch since its formation as the RN Old Comrades Association in 1947. Served as Escort to the Branch Standard whilst her late husband, Jim, was Branch Standard Bearer. Awarded the Certificate of Appreciation (COA) 2006. April 15. Aged 97.

**Ron Skinner**. PO Writer. Served WW2 in Ark Royal from her commissioning to her sinking. Founder member and branch committee member of Dursley & District branch. April 19. Aged 91.

**William 'Bill' Penny**. Former member of Middlesex Regiment. Associate Member of Harlow RNA. April 6. Aged 92.

**William Bradbury**. AB. Served onboard Exeter during the River Plate action against the Graf Spee. Life member Runcorn branch. April 23. Aged 94.

**George Erridge**. Seaman (Radar). Served 1942-46 and 1951-52 in Ganges, Valkyrie, Collingwood, Glenarm, Troubridge and Peregrine (RFR recall). Russian Convoy Association and Founder member, past Chairman and current President of Eastbourne RNA. May 3. Aged 87.

**Cdr John Dodd**. Served from 1942. Chairman and past welfare officer of the Southend RNA and vice chairman of the club; also past secretary for Southend branch of SSAFA and chairman of the Post Office Pensioners Federation. April 9.

**SUBMARINERS ASSOCIATION**

A 'Andy' Anderson. CERA. Submarine service 1943-46 in Stygian, Spark and Shakespeare. Merseyside branch. Aged 90.

R 'Ray' Comlash. LM(E). Served in submarines Thule, Tactician, Artful, Tiptoe and Thermopylae. Southampton branch. Aged 72.

D 'Bert' Fenwick. POME. Submarine service 1947-62 in Alliance, Alaric, Teredo, Sturdy, Sleuth, Aeneas, Thule and Taciturn. Leicester branch. Aged 82.

A W 'Tony' Garlinge. AB UC3. Submarine service 1959-65 in Seadevil, Seasoot, Tiptoe and Ambush. Poole & District branch. Aged 74.

Cdr H 'Paddy' Gowan. Submarine service 1939-65 in Sealion (40), Rover (40-42), Trusty (42), Simoom, H44 (43), Untiring, Ultor (44), Sidon (44-45), Statesman (45-46), Amphion (46-47) and Tireless (49-51). Scottish branch. Aged 96.

Capt R J P 'Robin' Heath. Submarine service 1949-83 in Auriga, Aurochs, Scorchor, Selene, Totem, Alderney, Andrew, Seasoot, Alcide, Acheron, Renown and Skipjack. Bath branch. Aged 83.

J 'John' Merritt. L/Sea. RP2. Submarine service 1952-59 in Tally-Ho, Thorough and Tiptoe. Beds & Herts branch. Aged 82.

Lt Cdr W 'Bill' Morrison VRD RNR. Submarine service 1943-45 in X3, X16, X25 and XE11. West of Scotland branch. Awarded OBE. Aged 88.

K 'Keith' Nethercoate-Bryant. Sto.1. Submarine service 1946-52 in Springer, Sportsman, Selene, Solent, Affray, Artemis, Scotsman and Tireless. Gatwick branch. Aged 84.

R T 'Ralph' Nunn. Tel. Submarine service 1945 in Safari. Portsmouth branch. Aged 88.

R 'Bob' Ramson. L/Sig. Submarine service 1948-56 in Aurochs, Selene, Teredo, Tiptoe and Upstart. Gosport branch. Aged 85.

D M 'Morris' Williams. Tel.T/O. Submarine service 1943-46 in Telemachus, Solent and H28. Welsh branch. Aged 88.

**ALGERINES ASSOCIATION**

James Greenhough. LSA. Served in Felicity. March 12. Aged 86.

James Mcall Anderson. L/Sea. Served in Rinaldo. March 27. Aged 78.

John Merrett. L/Sea. Served in Rinaldo and Magicienne. April 3. Aged 82.

Henry Caddow. AB. Served in Welcome. April 10. Aged 83.

S/Lt Michael Rathbone. Served in Rifleman. April 13. Aged 88.

George Bullock. L/Tel. Served in Pickle. April 15. Aged 78.

Peter Hall. S/Mec. Served in Bramble. April 17. Aged 86.

Albert Murphy. LSM. Served in Cheerful. April 17. Aged 80.

Lt Ted Harwood RNR. Served in Providence. April 20. Aged 89.

**HMS UNICORN ASSOCIATION**

Frank Hinchley. EM1. Served in Unicorn 3rd Commission (1952-53) also Korean War. October 17. Aged 79.

Raymond 'Frosty' Frost. AA4(O). Signed up as apprentice engineer the day war was declared. Served in Unicorn 1st Commission (1942-46) also RNAS Yeovilton. In his seventies was thought to be one of the oldest paragliding pilots in UK. Welfare Officer for Burma Star Association. January 12. Aged 89.

Henry Charles 'Stokes' Yates. L/Sto in Unicorn 1st Commission (1943-46). January 21. Aged 88.

Wilfred J 'Wilf' Jolley. LS. Served 1939-46 at Royal Arthur (39-40), Drake, Gloucester II, Flamingo (40-42), Torch, Caroline (42-43), Unicorn 1st Commission (1943-45), Golden Hind and Devonshire/Drake (45-46). April 23. Aged 93.

Clifford J Boston. Ldg Wine Steward HMS Unicorn 1st Commission (1942-46) also served in Theseus, Jamaica, Seahawk, Sluys, Cadiz and Vengeance. January 7. Aged 94.

## Sports lottery

April 21: £5,000 – Mne M S Walker; £1,500 – AB2 S J Pritchard; £500 – S/Lt M O Brown.

April 28: £5,000 – P O G J Holmes; £1,500 – AB1 L J Hay; £500 – LH C Heywood. May 5: £5,000 – Lt Cdr R Pearce; £1,500 – AB1 L J Hay; £500 – Mne J Brown.

May 12: £5,000 – Mne S P Coyne; £1,500 – AB1 G M Street; £500 – Mne K Clark.

Due to an administrative complication during December's 2011 Christmas draw, there will be a Diamond Jubilee re-draw on June 2 2012 to establish a winner of the £9,000 prize. This will be in addition to the normal six prizes of £5,000, £1,500, £500, £300, £200 and £100 on offer.

Entries for the Deaths' column and Swap Drafts in July's Noticeboard must be received by **June 11**

## Reunions

**JUNE 2012**  
**Falklands Veterans:** Mark Davis, a member of the South Atlantic Medal Association 1982 (SAMA82), has been tasked with coordinating the Falklands Veterans who wish to march as part of the National Armed Forces Day in Plymouth on June 30. If you would like to take part please drop Mark an email at [markdavis5@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:markdavis5@blueyonder.co.uk) or telephone 07890 970219.

**Algerine Association Reunion:** The AGM will take place on June 22 to 25 at the Mill Rythe Holiday Village, Hayling Island. Open to all who have served on Algerine class Fleet minesweepers and to any other RN Association members wishing to join us for an enjoyable weekend. For more details contact George Patience on 01456 450659 or Jim Squires on 01707 392000.

**JULY 2012**  
**HMS Nottingham Reunion:** A ten year reunion will take place on the evening of Friday 6 July 2012 at Collingwood Senior Rates' Mess for those onboard HMS Nottingham in 2002. Partners are welcome. Any old shipmates wishing to attend are to forward their details to Surg Lt Cdr G Wild RN at [nottreunion@gmail.com](mailto:nottreunion@gmail.com) or tel: Mil: 93785 4141 or Civ: 01392 414141.

**JARIC:** Calling serving/ex-serving members of JARIC. Join us on July 26 2012 for its Informal Closure Party. Contact Tel 01480 52151 Ext 7988 or [ICGJARIC-Closure-Events@mod.uk](mailto:ICGJARIC-Closure-Events@mod.uk)

**SEPTEMBER 2012**  
**British Pacific & East Indies Fleets & KG5 Associations:** Reunion from September 7 to 9 at the Britannia Hotel, Coventry. All usual facilities included. Package rate PP: £139 for three nights, £119 for two nights and £24.95 for Gala dinner only. Further info from John Grossett on 01943 600588 or Alf Lonsdale on 01293 432049 and for KG5, Jack Kilsby on 01327 703479.

**HMS Orion Association:** Annual reunion is to take place at the Astor Hotel, Plymouth from September 8 to 9. For further information contact Kay West at [kay.hmsorion@gmail.com](mailto:kay.hmsorion@gmail.com) or tel: 0116 259 2171.

**HMS Protector Association** is holding, by special request from members, a Social Reunion at the Afton Hotel, Eastbourne from September 21 to 24. Further details and booking forms available from Doug Harris at [dougatspindrift@aol.com](mailto:dougatspindrift@aol.com) or via the website at <http://www.hmsprotector.org/> or tel: 01495 718870.

**Stowmarket Schools:** Sue Green, née Gibbons, is organising a school reunion in September this year. Sue is hoping to find students whose parents were based at RAF Wattisham between 1975-80, including Derek Robins who is believed to have joined the Royal Marines. Sue can be contacted at [sue1162@talktalk.net](mailto:sue1162@talktalk.net) or tel: 01449 770620, or on facebook.

**Fast Minelayers Association:** The annual reunion and AGM will be held at the Ambassador Hotel, Scarborough, from September 14 to 17. For details contact John Lavis on 01383 851700.

**HMS Tamar:** Wrens of 72-73: First reunion will be held on September 8 at the Old Customs House, Gunwharf Quays, Portsmouth. Meet up and chat followed by dinner. We hope to see the fellas there too. For further details contact Kati Page (née Warren) at [kati@sequeely.co.uk](mailto:kati@sequeely.co.uk) or on 07801 063245 or Babs Blacklock (née Harrison) at [barbarablacklock@msn.com](mailto:barbarablacklock@msn.com) or on 07795 805573.

**HMS Mercury:** The second reunion to

be held at HMS Nelson WO SR & SNCOS Mess. September 8 – 1900-2359. For further details contact John Bisset at [mercuryreunion2012@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:mercuryreunion2012@hotmail.co.uk) or 023 9272 0443.

**Royal Naval Photographer's Association:** The AGM and Reunion takes place in Portsmouth from September 28 to 30 and is based at the Holiday Inn, Pembroke Road. A booking form is available from the RNPA website at <http://www.rnpa.info> and also from <http://www.navynews.co.uk/events/event/2271> Please send your post dated cheque, made out to the RNPA, asap to: Ray Whitehouse, RNPA Social Secretary, Mulberry House, Mulberry Hollow, Angmering, West Sussex, BN16 4JB. tel: 01903 366505 or email: [ray@chilton.com](mailto:ray@chilton.com).

**OCTOBER 2012**  
**RNH Stonehouse Reunion:** Takes place on October 5 and 6 at the Holiday Inn, The Hoe, Plymouth. Contact Sinbad Edwards at [badsin178edwar@aol.com](mailto:badsin178edwar@aol.com) or tel: 01752 790296.

**The Fisdarg Association (ex RN Apprentices):** Will be holding a Trafalgar Day Lunch and Reunion on October 17 at 1200 in the Harlequin Restaurant, The Guildhall, Portsmouth. The lunch is followed by a talk on the restoration of HMS Victory by its Curator Andrew Baines. For more details on this and other events, please contact the Association Secretary at [secretary@fisdargassociation.org](mailto:secretary@fisdargassociation.org) or visit our website [www.fisdargassociation.org](http://www.fisdargassociation.org) or tel: 023 9259 3867.

**River Plate Veterans Association:** 73rd Anniversary Reunion from October 5 to 7 in Plymouth. Details from Jim Smith at [Lyntondale@toucansurf.com](mailto:Lyntondale@toucansurf.com) or tel: 01302 841806.

**NOVEMBER 2012**  
"F40 Days to Armageddon": HMS Sirius will reunite on November 10 in Plymouth. Details available after 17 June at [hmsxpt-xo@mod.uk](mailto:hmsxpt-xo@mod.uk) and [andyayres@blackberry.orange.co.uk](mailto:andyayres@blackberry.orange.co.uk) or tel: 07813 567184 or on the website <http://www.hms Sirius.info> Spread the word like a gash buzz!

**JANUARY 2013**  
**HMS Fisdarg Series 32 Reunion:** A Reunion to celebrate the 55th Anniversary of Series 32 joining HMS Fisdarg is planned for January 4 to 7, 2013, with a dinner on the Saturday evening. The chosen venue is the Queens Hotel in Southsea, which many will know is close to the war memorial on Southsea Common. In addition to those of us that joined as S32, we would like to extend a welcome to any other Fisdargians that may have spent a goodly part of their Part 1/Part 2 training with us, having been back-classed into our little fraternity (many long-standing friendships will have been forged during our 12-term sojourns in Fisdarg, Collingwood, Caledonia and Condor). HMS Sultan is closed down until January 7, but some may wish to extend their stay to the Monday when a visit may be arranged to the Fisdarg Museum. Contact Mike Welfare at [mike126@mwelfare.plus.com](mailto:mike126@mwelfare.plus.com) or tel: 01435 868464.

**APRIL 2013**  
**HMS Protector Association:** 14th Grand Annual Reunion and AGM is to be held at The Aztec Hotel, Bristol, from April 26 to 29 2013. Early booking is highly recommended. Forms and further details available from Doug Harris at [dougatspindrift@aol.com](mailto:dougatspindrift@aol.com) or downloadable in due course from the website at <http://www.hmsprotector.org/> or tel: 01495 718870.

## Ask Jack

**Survey Ships Association:** Any past or present member of ships' company of any RN Survey ship is eligible to join as a full member. For information on membership and reunion send an SAE to: The Secretary SSA, 8 Grosvenor Court, 74 East Lodge Park, Portsmouth PO6 1BY, email: [secretary@surveyships.org.uk](mailto:secretary@surveyships.org.uk) or phone 023 9279 1258.

**HMS Raleigh, Benbow 30 Class 1980:** Trying to track down as many of the Benbow 30 class HMS Raleigh 1980 as possible. So far I have made contact with Barling,

Byrne, Gardner, Mills, Urquhart, Watson, Wenban, Mills and Roscoe, searching for the other guys, and also our old instructor PO Dunn. Please contact Derek 'Russ' Russell at [derek.russell@arco.co.uk](mailto:derek.russell@arco.co.uk) or tel: 07702 727747.

**Royal Tournament 1972:** Seeking photographs of Tim Rowbotham JEMI who took part in the Royal Tournament in 1972. If anyone can help could they contact Sharon Rowbotham at [sharon.rowbotham@devon.gov.uk](mailto:sharon.rowbotham@devon.gov.uk) or write to 41 Palegate Close, Honiton, Devon EX14 1QR.

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**Reporting from the Fleet**



# A Scilly way to spend a holiday

THE May Day bank holiday weekend saw 142 teams converge on the tiny island of St Mary's in the Isles of Scilly to determine which was the fastest pilot gig crew in the world.

Amongst those gathering for the three-day event were four crews in two Royal Navy boats – RNAS Cudrose (Daedalus) and HMS Raleigh (Jupiter) – both managing to field a men's and ladies team, including experienced and novice rowers.

Neither team was able to field a veteran crew this year, which left them watching the initial Friday evening action from the relative calm of the harbour wall; each crew perhaps wondering which would be the fastest RN boat come Sunday night.

Watching from the shore did, however, afford an insight into the tricky racing conditions that would follow in the morning.

The first round race on Saturday, used to seed the crews, saw an extended line of 125 racing gigs starting simultaneously on a 1.65-mile sprint.

Heading for the harbour into a stiff breeze with the sea on the beam made for awkward and uncomfortable rowing and Raleigh's men, perhaps more accustomed to the mirror finish on the River Lynher, did well to finish inches from the rudder of the Cudrose boat.

First blood to Daedalus and the close result meant the two teams would be racing side-by-side in the slightly shorter races three hours later.

The finishing position from the

first race denoted which group of 12 gigs teams would race against in the next phase of the competition and ensured a close contest.

Coming first or second in a group heat saw a crew bumped to the next tier, while those who came 11th and 12th positions dropped down a group, much like a squash league, so the next two heat races were vital for achieving a high final standing on Sunday evening.

Cudrose ladies rowed incredibly well in the seeding race which meant they competed in a group well above their counterparts from Raleigh but that did not dampen the Torpoint spirit and they managed to win their first group race to close the gap by 12 boats.

As predicted, the two Navy men's crews were more evenly matched but a blistering start from Raleigh meant the Cudrose cox could only watch them pull away with every stroke and streak to a convincing group win and group promotion.

Raleigh's cox Dave King, who works as a senior river instructor at Jupiter Point, said after the race: "Because of our bad lane draw, the start was everything. We had to get out of the blocks and squeeze ahead so I could get a better line on the finish."

"We pulled at over 40 strokes a minute for a lot longer than we do in training and I have no idea how the crew kept the power on for that long; it was awesome to watch and my throat is sore from shouting."

Promotion for Raleigh's men was a little daunting as it meant being in a group with a higher standard of rower and an experience level with which they



were not accustomed; the previous best finish for the boat being a full three groups (36 boats) lower.

Alas Cudrose just failed to secure the second slot and remained in the group with one more race to win promotion and stay with the ascending Raleigh crew.

Winning the group gave Raleigh another bad outside lane draw but the experience from the morning race meant they knew exactly what they had to do.

Unfazed by the higher standard

of the crews around them, they imposed their superior power as the flag was dropped, leading from start to finish they romped to another group win – a full four boat lengths clear of their nearest rival and now having one race left to secure an RN and club best-ever finish.

Another tight race for Cudrose saw them promoted but with only one round to go, Raleigh were unassailable with a two group advantage over their Cornish rivals.

The last round of the competition on the Sunday afternoon saw perfect rowing conditions with calm seas, no wind and the sunshine evaporating any excuses for a poor finish and for the first time ever in the history of the event, the ladies crews outnumbered the men's.

Continuing the excellent form they showed the whole weekend, the Cudrose ladies stormed home finishing 87th overall and third in their group, while the ladies from Raleigh, who took consolation

from a group-win medal, finished 121st.

A very close Group G final in which the Raleigh boat led for the majority of the race saw their men in Jupiter finish fifth in the group and an outstanding 77th overall, with the Cudrose boys finishing just 18 places behind and in the top 100 crews at 95th. And so the spoils and bragging rights went east to Torpoint.

Three of the crew from HMS Raleigh were more used to life underwater as instructors at the Submarine School, while the remainder providing boat handling and seamanship instruction at Jupiter Point; all however, are keen to commend this sport to a wider audience.

The submarine school's WO2 Nick Robinson, who pulls the No.4 oar, said after the final race: "I've played a lot of rugby in my life but I wish I'd found this sport earlier in my career."

"It is an incredibly friendly and social environment out here but the racing is intense and uncompromising, there is nowhere to hide in that boat once the flag falls, the team just has to work as a unit and the time spent training is key."

"We just lined up against a local boat crewed by six fit and strong 20-somethings and beat them by fourlengths and I'm nearly a super vet! (over 50)."

"This is an international competition with several crews from Europe and further afield – we lined up with world champions."

"I'd like to encourage anyone to get down the gym and ask their club-swingers about rowing, it really doesn't matter how old you are or what shape you are; one oar fits all."



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● Ms Louise Stanton presents the consecrated Colour to Mid (SCC) Keith Marshall RNR

## Malta GC gets new Colour

MALTA GC unit is this year celebrating the 50th anniversary of its formation at HMS Phoenicia on Manoel Island.

The highlight of the celebrations was the presentation of a new Colour to the unit in St Paul's Pro-Cathedral in Valletta.

Two Cadet Divisions followed by an armed Guard and a Colour Party were marched into the cathedral by Parade Commander Lt Cdr (SCC) Camilleri RNR in the presence of the Chancellor, the Rev Canon Simon Godfrey, and the Sea Cadet Staff Chaplain, the Rev Beau Brandie RNR.

The presentation started with the arrival of unit patron, British High Commissioner Louise Stanton, who was accompanied to the high altar by the Church Warden, Lt Cdr Clive Bennington.

Cadet Colour Bearer Nathan Barbara handed over the new Colour to Rev Brandie for consecration, and was replaced by the Officer Colour Bearer, Mid Keith Marshall RNR.

The Colour was consecrated in a ceremony which ended with the singing of *Abide With Me*, after which Ms Stanton presented the Colour to the Officer Colour Bearer.

Former members of the unit who have crossed the bar were remembered, and the *Last Post* and *Reveille* were sounded before CO Lt (SCC) Montebello RNR and a rating from HMS Ledbury placed wreaths at the High Altar.

The Colour was handed to the Church Warden for safekeeping with the rest of the Ensigns and Colours that adorn the cathedral.

## Barnsley visit

BARNSELY welcomed the Navy's Regional Commander Northern England, Cdre Dickie Baum, to the unit to meet cadets and volunteers, look at improvement work and discuss development projects.

At the end of the evening Cdre Baum handed cadets their qualifications, and presented the unit's efficiency burgee to CO CPO (SCC) Devonport.

# Herne Bay in demand

FOLLOWING a well-received performance for the Duke of Edinburgh at the opening of the Sammy Offer Wing at Greenwich Maritime Museum last year, Herne Bay unit's band was invited to play the *National Anthem* for the Queen at the official re-opening of the Cutty Sark.

And the honour was not confined to the Corps national contest class-winning band, as cadets from Greenwich unit lined the streets alongside colleagues from London and Southern Area units.

Herne Bay's musicians staged an impressive display of marching and musicianship for onlookers and tourists, despite the poor weather.

And following that event, the band was invited to perform in the stunning Painted Hall at Greenwich after being heard by organisers of a corporate event being held there in the evening.

Their flawless performance prompted further discussions on future events...

Herne Bay CO Lt (SCC) Paul Fenn RNR said: "We were honoured and thrilled to have been asked to play for Her Majesty, and the guest performance in the Painted Hall just topped off a day that will always be remembered as something very special for the cadets."

Drummer AC Nicholas Burgess said: "It was such an honour to stand on the Cutty Sark and play



● The Herne Bay unit band in the Painted Hall at Greenwich

the *National Anthem* for the Queen – it's not something you are asked to do every day."

Drum Major Jonathan Beoney, who met the Duke of Edinburgh at the museum last year, said:

"Meeting His Royal Highness was fantastic, but playing for the Queen is the icing on the cake."

"An experience of a lifetime – an honour I will cherish."

The band and its members

are always in demand – some of the young musicians were also on Royal duty at the Tower of London shortly after as part of the National Band escorting the Queen's Jubilee Diamond.

## Rotarian award for Wendy

THE Commanding Officer of Lowestoft unit has been named a Paul Harris Fellow by the Rotary Club of Lowestoft East Point.

East Point worked with the Rotary Club of Lowestoft South and the Rotary Foundation to raise half the cost of the unit's Viking power boat.

And after a talk by Lt Cdr (SCC) Wendy Theobald RNR at the club, Rotarian David Collins recommended Wendy for the award, named after the American lawyer who founded the first Rotary Club in Chicago in 1905.

Wendy was presented with her award at the St George's Dinner, where guests were piped into dinner by LC Ryan Mottram of the Lowestoft unit.

## Stalwart mourned

A Sea Cadet Corps stalwart who originally joined the Girls Nautical Training Contingent (GNTC) as a cadet has died at the age of 69.

Lt Cdr (SCC) Val Barron RNR became hooked on sailing while a cadet, and in 1967 joined the GNTC as an adult volunteer, attaining the rank of Second

Officer and commanding units at Southampton, Chandlers Ford and Salisbury.

After a break while she and her husband raised a family, Val rejoined the SCC (into which the GNTC had been absorbed).

She was tasked by the Captain Sea Cadets as an HQ Staff Officer to re-write the Writer/Stores and Cook/Steward manual for the 1992 revision of training instructions.

Val also travelled widely in the UK and abroad as an escort officer for cadets.

## Sea Cadet band leads parade

THE South West Area Sea Cadet Band led a parade of Sea, Army and Air Cadets onto Whitehall in London for the annual St George's Day wreath-laying ceremony.

The event is organised by the Royal Society of St George, and the VIP this year was the Captain Sea Cadets, Capt Mark Windsor.

The 30-piece band was made up of musicians from Portland, Sutton Coldfield and Dartmouth units,

with further individuals from Plymouth Drake, Swansea, Bristol, Taunton and Basingstoke.

Platoons from London Area also took part.

The band travelled to London the evening before, leaving only enough time for a 45-minute rehearsal in the morning, but the parade went smoothly, and at 11am two buglers from Portland unit, AC Tom Cox and LC Tom Louch, sounded the *Last Post* followed by the *Reveille*.



## Dannyboy Trust helps Sheppey

A GENEROUS grant from a fund set up in the name of a soldier killed in Afghanistan has helped Sheppey unit obtain three new boats.

The Sea Cadet Corps is currently in the process of becoming able to award British Rowing qualifications, which will be nationally recognised for all who gain them.

In order to be able to deliver this training, Sheppey unit was required to allow their cadets the opportunity of participating in slide-seat rowing, similar to that seen at the Olympics.

One specific craft which allows this form of training is a Yole, which can be rigged for single or paired use.

Each Yole costs in the region of £3,500.

Some intensive research led to the acquisition of three Yole craft from the AHOY Centre in Greenwich at a very reasonable price of £3,750 for all three.

However, the unit had only managed to raise £2,000 towards the cost of one Yole, so it applied to a local charity, the Dannyboy Trust, for a grant.

The Dannyboy Trust was set up by the family and friends of Rifleman Daniel Holkham, who was killed in March 2010.

The trust offers support to schools, youth clubs and children's organisations and sports clubs so that youngsters may gain experiences that will support them in every aspect of life.

After a visit to Sheppey's HQ, the trust agreed to fund the remaining £1,750, allowing Sheppey to finalise the purchase of all three Yoles.

Members of the trust visited the unit again to see the cadets in training and to watch the naming ceremony (pictured above) – the three Yoles have been named after the Dannyboy Trust, in order to ensure this generosity would be continually remembered.

## First aid course success

WHEN individuals first join the Sea Cadets, they get to take part in exciting events and activities such as sailing and weekend camps.

The Corps promises fun and good friends – and the chance to learn useful skills such as communications, seamanship, nautical skills and first aid training.

And the latter is the area that Camberley and Farnborough unit has been concentrating on as senior cadets and members of staff successfully completed their Royal Navy Level Two First Aid training.

As the trainees learned new skills, their instructors from the Defence Medical Services Training Group (DMSTG) saw a rise in confidence and an increase in ability, under pressure, to deal with the most complex of first aid situations.

The cadets enjoyed the theoretical and practical elements throughout which, upon a successful pass, add to the future promotion to the next rate.

And suitably-trained staff members means there should always be adequate provision of qualified adults at unit activities.

DMSTG (Aldershot) staff took time out of their busy programme to offer their expertise.

Senior cadets were said to have really enjoyed the course and working with military instructors from DMSTG, while staff expressed their gratitude for the efforts put into the training.

The unit was also pleased that the CO of the Defence School of Medical Technical Training, Cdr Roy Manwaring, was able to visit them to see training taking place and to meet the students.

## Fund run

TUNBRIDGE Wells cadet William Greenwood-Spicer ran the Heathfield 5k fun run – not so much fun in torrential rain, admittedly – to raise money for Combat Stress and to fund his trip on TS John Jerwood.

The 12-year-old, who had never done such a run before, completed the course in just over an hour, raising £200 for his trip and £219 for Combat Stress.



● POCs Jade and Samuel Martin

## Pride of the family

A BROTHER and sister at Margate unit have both achieved the highest level within the Corps for a cadet.

Samuel and Jade Martin have reached the rank of Petty Officer Cadet.

Samuel made the step up in November 2010, and has now been joined by Jade, who was promoted in March this year.

Margate believes it is a special achievement to have two POCs in one unit – and even more so to be siblings.

Gaining that level requires a high level of assessment in leadership skills, instructional methods and drill and ceremonial power of command.

Samuel, who hopes to soon join the Household Cavalry, has also recently achieved the

specialisation of Cadet Drill Instructor – a rare and difficult achievement for cadets to reach, and Samuel attained the highest grade of pass within the Southern Area Sea Cadets for many years.

Jade has also just been selected and announced as this year's Cinque Port Lord Warden's Cadet.

This role will involve accompanying Admiral the Lord Boyce, Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, to various high-profile events throughout the year as an ambassador for the Corps.

Their parents, Lt Cdr (SCC) Kevin Martin RNR, Deputy District Officer East Kent Sea Cadets, and Petty Officer (SCC) Liz Martin, Officer in Charge of the unit, said how very proud they are of their son's and daughter's achievements.



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## New man heads up Teesside

A FORMER Navy tiffy has been appointed District Officer for Teesside.

Lt Cdr (SCC) Mick Williams RNR (above) joined the RN as an MEA in 1983, and went on to serve in HM ships Fearless, Intrepid and Repulse before leaving the Service and moving to the North East of England with his wife in 1991 to raise a family.

By now a member of Cleveland Police (rising to the rank of Chief Inspector), Mick joined the Corps at Guisborough in 2004 and quickly identified a need for a unit in Redcar, which had been without a unit for more than 30 years.

The unit Mick started now boasts 38 cadets, seven junior cadets, 12 staff and an eight-strong unit management committee.

Last year Redcar achieved its first Burgee – the highest efficiency award – and won the newly-introduced MSSC Award as the best unit in Teesside District.

Mick, a qualified RYA Senior Dinghy Instructor, Powerboat Instructor and Coastal Skipper, has forged strong links with the RNA, RBL, Merchant Navy Association, RNLI, Coast Watch and Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council, ensuring the unit is a fundamental part of the community.

## District change

THE former CO of Hinckley unit has stepped down after 18 years in charge of Northants and Leicester District.

Lt Cdr (SCC) Paul Perry RNR saw his district win the Navy League Trophy last year for the best performance in annual unit review visits.

Paul takes over as Area SO Public Relations (and continues in his role of Area SO Piping).

His successor as District Officer is Lt Cdr (SCC) Chris Read RNR, former CO of Northampton.



● A Sea Cadet Trinity 500 boat

## Key role for Corps in Jubilee pageant

MORE than ten per cent of UK Sea Cadets will be on duty during the Diamond Jubilee River Pageant on the Thames early this month.

Perhaps the most prominent amongst them will be the youngsters in the 55-strong flotilla of Trinity 500 boats which will lead the Queen's barge in a diamond formation.

Each boat, powered by an outboard engine supplied by Suzuki, will carry four cadets and two adult supervisors, and will fly the flag of a Commonwealth country as they make their way down the 11km route from Wandsworth to Greenwich.

The boats are named after Trinity House, the country's oldest maritime organisation, which celebrated its 500th anniversary in 2010, and whose

MEDWAY Towns and Gravesend joined forces for a weekend biathlon to raise funds for their units.

On the Saturday, kayakers and canoeists – many of them novices – took to the Medway, covering 26 miles of the river from Tonbridge to Allington Lock in the first half of a double-headed trial of fitness, determination and stamina.

The next day cadets, staff and adult supporters got on their bikes at the newly-built Cyclopark near the A2 at Gravesend, where they completed 16 laps – equivalent to more than 25 miles.

The rain held off on both days, but each trial was a challenge of mind over matter, with upper body strength being put to the test in the kayaks and the legs undergoing a severe examination on the bikes.

In total there were 26 people at the waterborne challenge, with most of those taking up the baton on the Sunday as well, joined by a further 28 to make a total of 54 cyclists.

Southern Area Chairman Ivor Riddell, who set the cyclists on their way, said: "This unique fundraising effort reflects the values and ethos of the Sea Cadets – having serious fun with a real purpose."

"The fact that so many people have turned out to take the challenge says volumes for the Sea Cadets and how important it is too for those who become involved."

Event organiser CPO (SCC) Steve Baxter, of Medway Towns,

## Power assistance

EMPLOYEES from Scottish and Southern Hydro Electric (SSE) visited Methil and District unit to help in a way that money can't buy.

The group travelled to the coastal town in Fife to give a full day's work to assist in the maintenance and upkeep of the unit as part of the SSE's charity day.

S/Lt (SCC) Fiona Sekkat RNR said: "The work of the men



● Cadets and supporters from Medway Towns and Gravesend units paddle on the Medway (above) and prepare to clock up the laps at Cyclopark in Gravesend (below)



said: "I am really proud of the cadets and adults who have taken part over the two days."

"Without people like these the Sea Cadets would not be able to achieve half of what it does and provide a real service to the young people across the UK."

"I would especially like to thank Ted Tickner and Adrian Cooke from TRI The Bike Shop, based in Gravesend, who provided technical support, running repairs and maintenance on the Sunday

at Cyclopark.

"They were such a big help in keeping things moving."

Following a straw poll of the participants, once all the pledges are in, Medway Towns unit will benefit from their efforts to the tune of over £4,000 while Gravesend estimate their take to be in the region of £2,000 – which means £6,000 was raised over two days of hard work and fun in a triumph of co-operative working between neighbouring units.

The CO of Medway Towns, spotted speeding around on a pushbike dressed as a somewhat overheated Tigger, said: "The determination of all the cadets to complete the challenge impressed me most of all."

"Many of them were novice paddlers and many hadn't ridden further than the local shops on a bike."

"But every single one of them completed the course, and raised a lot of cash for their unit."



● From left, MC1 Chris Hughes, LC Tom Pocock and AC Alexander George

## Third success for trio

THREE cadets from Southend unit have completed their RYA Day Skipper Practical Motor Cruising qualification.

That is an impressive achievement on its own, but this qualification adds to the RYA Day Skipper Practical Sailing and RYA

Day Skipper Theory qualifications they already hold.

The three demanding courses required the cadets to demonstrate skills in practical navigation, close quarters manoeuvring, and a variety of other tasks including blind pilotage, emergency steering and use of radar.

The RYA Day Skipper qualification is the first step towards offshore command, and is usually a qualification gained by adult boaters.

TS Implacable's CO, Lt (SCC) Les Hawkins RNR, said: "For 15- or 16-year-old cadets to achieve any one of the RYA Day Skipper qualifications is an excellent achievement."

"For the cadets to complete all three is nothing short of outstanding."

"Having one cadet with these qualifications within a unit is really something to be proud of, but to have three cadets within a single unit is probably unique."

"I am extremely proud of their hard work and efforts – they really are a credit to themselves, TS Implacable and the Sea Cadet Corps as a whole."

"The cadets are now working on the RYA Yachtmaster qualification, which I have no doubt they will achieve in the not-too-distant future."



## Titanic remembered

ON a sunny but cold Sunday morning on the shore of Belfast Loch, cadets from Carrickfergus unit joined the rest of their community in a memorial service 100 years to the day that the Titanic sank in the North Atlantic after striking an iceberg.

A Sea Cadet wreath was laid by OC Rachel Clyde and JLC Matthew Black (pictured above) to remember more than 1,500 people who died that night, many of them children.

During the memorial service AC Rachel Hodgson piped the Still to mark the start of the one-minute silence.

## Jonathan climbs to top rank

POC JONATHAN Hemingway has reached the top cadet rank following six years of hard work – the first cadet at Rickmansworth and Watford unit to reach the top of the sea cadet ladder.

The unit is going from strength to strength, having gone through a period of restructuring after the appointment of a new unit command team.

S/Lt (SCC) Graeme Cawsey RNR, the new CO, said: "Taking command at TS Renown has been a very rewarding experience already."

"POC Hemingway is just one of seven cadets we've promoted recently, and our numbers are steadily growing."

"It is also testament to the previous command team who, due to heavy work commitments, have had to hand over the reins of the unit, but have stayed involved and are helping to drive the unit goals forward."

## Inquest verdict

A VERDICT of death by misadventure has been recorded in the inquest of 14-year-old Cdt Jonathan Martin, who died when he fell from the rigging of TS Royalist off Gosport in May 2010.

Portsmouth Coroner's Court was told that Jonathan had unclipped his safety harness to help a fellow cadet while they were working aloft, but lost his grip and fell.

He was quickly recovered from the sea and airlifted to hospital, but died of his injuries.

Following the inquest, Martin Coles, the CEO of Marine Society Sea Cadets (MSSC), said: "Jonathan's loss continues to be felt deeply by the charity and our sympathy remains with his parents."

"The safety of our staff, volunteers and cadets is paramount to the charity, as demonstrated by 30,000 cadets having sailed on TS Royalist over the last 39 years without similar incident."

"We help young people develop valuable life skills through a range of adventurous activities, including on board TS Royalist, and focus on continual improvement in safety."

"A thorough review of our Fleet Safety Management System started before the incident, and we have incorporated actions arising from this into a full implementation of the recommendations of the MAIB's report."

"We have been supported in this by external experts and the Royal Navy."

## Top roles in Midlands

A LEADING Cadet from Birmingham Sherbourne unit has been appointed Lord Lieutenant's Sea Cadet for the West Midlands.

LC Daniel Cutler assumed his duties at an investiture ceremony in the Council Chamber of Birmingham Council House.

Daniel has been a member of Birmingham Sherbourne for the last two years and is currently undertaking his BTEC in Public Services while also continuing the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, utilising Sea Cadet waterborne and land-based training.

Meanwhile, 40 miles north-west of the civic heart of Birmingham, POC Luke Benting of Telford unit was being formally welcomed into a similar role for the Lord Lieutenant of Shropshire.

Luke, who joined the Corps three years ago, was selected by the Lord Lieutenant, Algernon Herber-Percy, and his investiture took place at Shrewsbury Castle.

Like Daniel, Luke opted for a BTEC in Public Services (being awarded a distinction star) and has just completed his Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award.



Saracen's story in the spotlight

THE wreck of a wartime British submarine could feature prominently in ceremonies marking the 70th anniversary of the efforts to liberate Corsica.

According to author Terry Hodgkinson, a member of a Corsican diving school has found the remains of HMS Saracen in around 100m of water to the north of the island.

"HMS Saracen was scuttled near to Bastia by her captain, Lt Michael Lumby, on Saturday August 14 1943 after she had been damaged by the Italian corvettes Minerva and Euterpe on Friday August 13," he said.

"Lumby refused to lose his ship on that day because of the bad luck associated with it, and they remained underwater until two o'clock on Saturday morning.

"They then surfaced and the crew abandoned ship before Lumby and his Chief Engineer, who were the last to leave, opened the sea-cocks and scuttled her with her engines still running.

"Apparently she just sailed away into the darkness.

"Two crew members didn't make it and she is now declared a war grave.

"HMS Saracen had previously been called P63, was renumbered P213 but was renumbered yet again to P247 to remove the unlucky 13.

"She is the same submarine which landed three secret agents, a Belgian and two Corsicans, for M16 at the bay of Cupabia on the west coast of Corsica in February 1943, and I wrote a small book about the mission, in French, called *Frederick le Mission Oubli e*."

The author said that the boat was becoming a real threat in the area; one of her victims was the Italian troopship Francesco Crispi, which sank with the loss of 800 soldiers en route to Corsica – an action which endeared the submarine to the islanders.

The boat had been in commission barely a year, but many of her crew lived to fight another day – probably more quickly than they expected, as Italy surrendered just weeks later and the POWs were freed to join the Allied war effort once again.

Lt Lumby – who went on to command HMS Belfast – and his fellow officers were not quite so lucky, spending the rest of the war in POW camps in Germany.

A marble plaque in the citadel in Bastia bears Saracen's bronze badge, and a large granite monument, on the beach at Cupabia in south western Corsica, marks the spot close to where the secret agents were landed.

"On September 9 2013 it will be the 70th anniversary of the Liberation of Corsica and there will be a very large and important ceremony to commemorate the event," said Terry.

"Families of HMS Saracen's crew are already making plans to travel to the island from as far away as Canada and Australia.

"What more fitting tribute could there be than to locate and film the remains of HMS Saracen 70 years on from the very day she was scuttled?

"Stephan LeGallais, a very experienced local diver, who has discovered many wrecks off the east coast of Corsica, and works on the Bastia lifeboat, is very keen to be involved and could provide the boats and back up facilities needed for the project.

"He has his own website which shows pictures of some of the wrecks he has visited at [www.legallais.net](http://www.legallais.net)"

Now the hunt is on for sponsors who could help cover the costs of boats in Bastia and an underwater ROV with a camera which can transmit live pictures to the surface.

If his plans come to fruition, Terry hopes that major TV channels would be interested in covering the event.

"For me, the story of HMS Saracen is a great *Boy's Own Paper* tale of buccaneering and bravery, and should be told," said Terry, who can be contacted at [terry60@easynet.co.uk](mailto:terry60@easynet.co.uk)

Big day for Plymouth – and many others

THE spotlight might be shining on the South-West, but communities across the country are preparing to stage their own tribute to Servicemen and women past and present on Armed Forces Day, Saturday June 30.

This year's National Event is being hosted by Plymouth, and as befits a city with a rich military heritage, organisers are promising

a spectacular salute to the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force.

The event programme is expected to include the opportunity to visit HMS Argyll at anchor in the Sound, a Drumhead Service on the Hoe, a parade of Armed Forces past and present, exhibitions and displays, and an air show including modern and historic aircraft.

There will also be a packed programme of music and

entertainment including performances from the Military Wives Choir, a cadet band competition and highlights from the *Music of the Night* event.

The big day itself is the culmination of a week of events in Plymouth – for more details see the city council website at [www.plymouth.gov.uk/armedforcesweek.html](http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/armedforcesweek.html)

Other towns and cities are planning major celebrations of

their own – more than 100 other events have been registered under the umbrella of Armed Forces Day 2012.

Blackpool, as usual, has a busy Armed Forces Week lined up with a variety of concerts, parades, services and social events, while Cardiff (AFD main host city in 2010) promises a parade through the city centre and a drumhead service.

Doncaster is staging a parade through the town centre by veterans, military units, cadets, Rotarians, Scouts, Guides and schoolchildren, led by police horses and a military band.

The Historic Dockyard in Chatham – host for the first Armed Forces Day national event in 2009 – offers a ticketed Beat Retreat and Ceremonial Sunset following a day of activities in nearby Rochester.

It's not all about the big cities and towns though – the Armed Forces Day website has details of all the registered events, plus an interactive map and calendar.

Not every community has chosen the last weekend of this month to celebrate the Forces – Teignmouth, for example, was due to hold its Jubilee Year Armed Forces Day on the last weekend of May.

See [www.armedforcesday.org.uk](http://www.armedforcesday.org.uk) for the full list of participating towns, cities and villages.

The National Memorial Arboretum marks Armed Forces Day itself by welcoming the Olympic Torch at 8.30am as it makes its way round the country before the start of the Games.

For the Arboretum's planned programme, including a Service of Tribute, see [www.thenma.org.uk](http://www.thenma.org.uk)

And it is not just about communities – commercial groups are also entering into the spirit of the event by offering special deals.

Crown Carveries, for example, is offering a free breakfast or carvery to all Navy, Army and RAF men and women, past and present, between Monday June 25 and Saturday June 30.

Just visit [www.crown-carveries.co.uk](http://www.crown-carveries.co.uk) or [www.facebook.com/crown-carveries](http://www.facebook.com/crown-carveries) to download the 'free Forces meal' voucher and present it, along with current ID card or veterans lapel badge, to staff at the restaurant.

Please note, because of deadlines *Navy News* will report on AFD in our August edition.



Massed bands' forte...

WHEN three Royal Marines bands joined forces in 1973 to give a concert in aid of the Royal Academy of Music, little did they know that a great tradition was about to be founded – the Mountbatten Festival of Music.

Now probably the most famous massed military band concert in the world, the 40th consecutive festival took place over three nights in April in front of near-capacity houses at the Royal Albert Hall (above).

The evening started with the haunting theme from *2001: A Space Odyssey*, complete with theatrical lighting effects.

Other highlights included the world premiere of *Task Force* by WO2 Bandmaster Russ Young RM, a piece for massed bands and drums dedicated to the personnel who served on Operation Corporate 30 years ago.

Maj Tony Smallwood, conducting at his final Festival, concluded the first half with his arrangement of Barry Manilow hits. Also at their final festival were Band C/Sgts Joe Sharp and Gary Halsey, who have

performed many solos at the Festival over the years.

The concert ended with a new arrangement by WO1 Bandmaster Tom Hodge, the Corps' Bandmaster, of Emerson Lake & Palmer's version of *Fanfare For The Common Man*.

On the first two evenings the Commandant General Royal Marines hosted members of Hasler company and bereaved family members, many attending for the first time.

Organisers hope to have raised about £120,000 for CLIC Sargent and Service charities.

As this year marked the 40th in the series, a special DVD has been produced in addition to the usual CD, with proceeds going to the Royal Marines Charitable Trust Fund and CLIC Sargent. For details, visit the website at [www.royalmarinesbands.co.uk](http://www.royalmarinesbands.co.uk)

The Massed Bands present their Musical Spectacular on Horse Guards Parade on June 6 and 7 – for tickets call 02392 312006 or see [www.royalmarinesmusicalspectacular.co.uk](http://www.royalmarinesmusicalspectacular.co.uk)

On the list

THE Historic Dockyard at Chatham – Large Visitor Attraction of the year in 2011 – has been shortlisted in the 'Britain's Best Heritage Attraction' category of the *Countryfile Magazine* Awards 2012.

Enigma code wheels handed over

A SET of Enigma code rotors has been reunited with their original machine after 29 years apart following a handover at the National Museum of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth.

The box of three rotors was found

in a store in HMS Collingwood, and when the significance of the rotors was realised it was found that the box had the same serial number as a machine already presented to the museum by HMS Mercury in 1983.

Learning life skills

STAFF based at Whale Island were invited in to Navy Command HQ to learn basic lifesaving skills.

Lt Sharon Edwards from the NCHQ Medical Division organised a Basic Life Support (BLS) Awareness day, working on the principle that the effective application of basic life support techniques can save lives and is a skill that everyone should know.

With the support of Cdr Paul Jones, CO of HMS Excellent, personnel came to learn about the skills in a fun, informative way.

The event was planned to coincide with the British Heart Foundation's (BHF) Awareness Day, and highlighted the actions required when helping the victim of a suspected cardiac arrest.

Emphasis was placed on the importance of delivering cardio-pulmonary or 'chest' compressions (CPR) either independently of manual ventilation (as in the BHF 'Hard and Fast' campaign fronted by Vinnie Jones) or with ventilation (mouth-to-mouth) should the person giving aid be confident and competent to do so.

Lt Edwards led a team of medical personnel, including Lt Cdr Karl Hurley, POMA Lyndsy Robinson, LMA Wayne Huxtable, LMA Sarah Gordon and MA Amy Cooperthwaite, which gave instruction on both methods of

resuscitation using the Resussie-Annie doll and a training model Automatic External Defibrillator (AED), followed by an opportunity to get practical experience of the procedures in a relaxed and supportive environment.

Using music with a rhythm of 100–110 beats per minute has been shown to improve an individual's technique and pace in delivering CPR during training; as individuals performed CPR, the sound track of *Staying Alive* (as used in the BHF 'Hard and Fast' campaign) was played to demonstrate the correct pace that CPR should be delivered for best effect.

The team also gave advice on the management of a collapsed child that has stopped breathing – a child is more likely to stop breathing because of respiratory-related complications than cardiac problems.

Ventilation may be vital to saving the life of a collapsed child; five rescue breaths should be given to a child that has stopped breathing before commencing CPR, according to the Resuscitation Council Guidelines (2010).

The location of all AEDs within Excellent was prominently displayed at each stand to ensure everyone knew of their whereabouts, and disposable, one-way-valve face masks were given



to individuals to take away and be used, should the need arise.

Some 120 people attended, including Deputy Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Philip Jones (pictured above), who said: "This is a positive initiative that has been well-received.

"Basic Life Support is something that everyone should be aware of and able to do; no one knows when they may need it and it may be the difference that saves

someone's life."

Surg Cdre Andrew Hughes, Head of the RN Medical Service, said: "In NCHQ Medical Division our objective is to provide the best standard of health care to our people across the whole Naval Service.

"The BLS awareness day was an ideal opportunity for the qualified staff from MEDDIV to increase awareness within the HQ of these vital life support skills."



Heritage brought to your door

A COMPANY which produces aviation clothing for the MOD, police and professional pilots has diversified – into Naval heritage architectural details.

XiC's new manufacturing arm has already designed and created its first product, a reproduction of the officers' gangway portico entrance (above).

Available in different widths, the company expects interest from officers' office entrances, wardrooms and ratings' messes or for private houses where the owner would like a distinctive nautical touch.

They are weather-resistant, so can be used internally or externally, and the starting price is £2,500 – the minimum width fits over a standard door.

So why the move into the Naval heritage field? Well, the director of the company, Edward Johnson, has a lifelong interest in historic marine architecture – and he served in the Royal Navy himself.

Interested parties should email [sales@xinteractiveclothing.com](mailto:sales@xinteractiveclothing.com)

Prayers for the Forces

IN times of conflict and challenge in the past, the nation was called upon to pray for her sailors, soldiers, airmen and their families.

This call has been taken up again and, over the past six years, an annual Day of Prayer for the Armed Forces has been held.

Initially it was held near to Remembrance Day, but it is now tied into Armed Forces Day, to emphasise the focus on those who are currently serving and their families and friends.

The Day of Prayer is supported by the Armed Forces Chaplaincies and by the many military Christian organisations that are associated with, and serve, the Armed Forces, (specifically for the RN and RM the Naval Christian Fellowship and Aggie Weston's).

This year the main focus will be at St Augustine's, Queensgate, London, on Thursday June 28, and the church will be available for prayer and worship from 10am until 3.30pm, with a formal service starting at 11.15am.

As in previous years, services and events will also be held throughout the country and in deployed units and ships, and indeed in Afghanistan and other operational theatres.

Full details are held in all Chaplaincies, and information concerning meetings and services outside of London, will be published locally.

The event in London is covered by DIN 2011 DIN01-036. Further information is available from Service Chaplains, Aggie Weston's Pastoral Workers, Naval Christian Fellowship, the Armed Forces Christian Union or Theresa Pratt at Aggie Weston's on 023 9265 0505, [Theresa.pratt@rsr.org.uk](mailto:Theresa.pratt@rsr.org.uk)

Gunnery fun

AMONGST the Spring activities at the Historic Dockyard in Chatham is the chance to sample life on board HMS Cavalier in her heyday in 'Man the Guns!'

From June 2-10 her guns will be fired, then participants can join the crew on the mess deck and even witness the captain punishing miscreants.

See [www.thedockyard.co.uk](http://www.thedockyard.co.uk) for more details.



## More ships than admirals

IN THIS Diamond Jubilee celebratory month, step back in time to the very beginning of the reign of Elizabeth II.

Maritime Books have done just that by recreating their popular annual tome on the Fleet, **British Warships and Auxiliaries**, as if it were 1952 (£25 ISBN 978-1-904459-453) in the same format as the rest of the series, which began in 1979 (albeit hardback given its size).

Author Steve Bush has compiled the 1952 guide to the Fleet – which for the uninitiated is a sort of profusely-illustrated pared-down version of *Jane's* focusing not on the navies of the world, just Britain and her Dominions.

On paper, the RN of 1952 was a potent force: more than 400 ships in the *active* Fleet (18 carriers in service or being built, 15 cruisers, 40 submarines, 48 destroyers, 72 frigates, 28 minesweepers, over 80 patrol craft, a similar number of auxiliaries and over 40 landing ships).

In addition the RN had some 400 vessels on its books in the *reserve* Fleet – from great names such as Duke of York and Anson to a myriad of wartime escorts.

Impressive as these numbers are, they tell only part of the story. 1952 represents a Royal Navy very much in flux, still transitioning between the demands of World War 2 and the Cold War, between the piston-engined era and the jet age, between the day of the big gun and the missile.

To meet these new challenges, Whitehall chose to invest and modernise – massively. In 1952 there were more than 100 vessels being built, converted or designed.

It did so against the backdrop of crippling debts from WW2 and the alarming rise in the cost of warships caused by new technologies: a destroyer in 1914 cost £150 per ton to build; the figure in 1952 was £700.

Fast forward to 2012 and today's Government faces some familiar issues – crippling debts and spiralling technological costs (a destroyer now costs £70,000 per ton to build... discounting the cost of the missile system).

The result is that while the 1952 edition of *British Warships* extends to more than 350 pages; the 2012 volume (£8.99 ISBN 978-1-904459-477) is a mere 112 – and barely 40 of those are devoted to warships and auxiliaries.

As ever Bush's commentary is insightful – and pulls no punches. In 1952, he says, the nation's leaders “were prepared to pay what it took to ensure that UK Plc could defend itself”.

Sixty years later, they “can only see the armed forces as a drain on resources and a prime candidate for clawing back money for spending on vote-winning departments such as Health and Social Security”.

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# The challenge met

## A remarkable tale of escape

IT'S the sort of story which, had it featured Americans, would have had Hollywood drooling all over it.

It didn't. Just lots of plucky Brits, a one-legged Chinese admiral, a WW1 naval reservist who was a bit of a stickler and a handful of old torpedo boats.

But in the dark days of late December 1941, five dozen men broke out of Hong Kong by boat, then fled across land, evading Japanese patrols, and reaching Chinese lines at Waichow to acclaim in Nationalist China.

The remarkable story has achieved almost mythical status in some circles – indeed, there's even a re-enactors' group – but otherwise it's an episode largely lost to history, certainly in Britain at any rate.

Until now. Tim Luard, a former BBC Beijing correspondent has trawled public and private archives, interviewed survivors and their families to paint a vivid picture – not just of **The Escape from Hong Kong** (Hong Kong University Press, £29.95 ISBN 978-988-8083-763) – but of the final days of the imperial possession and the brave but forlorn efforts to defend it.

Unlike Singapore, Churchill held out little hope for holding Hong Kong – and so there was relatively little in the way of naval forces defending it in December 1941 when the Rising Sun struck: one destroyer, three gunboats and eight motor torpedo boats, plus some 1,400 sailors and Royal Marines.

Luard, son-in-law of one of the escape party, paints a vivid picture of the characters and the chaos of Hong Kong's fall – and of the admiral who was China's senior adviser in the colony.

Chan Chak had lost a leg before the war fighting the Japanese and while many of his staff and colleagues might slip into obscurity disguised as coolies when Hong Kong fell, his prominence and disability meant he could not.

Moreover, Chan was deemed vital to the Chinese cause, so the decision was taken to evacuate him by torpedo boat.

And so after dark on Christmas Day 1941, as Hong Kong fell, a mish-mash of personnel of various nationalities left Aberdeen Harbour hoping to make land on the Chinese mainland 25 miles to the northeast; from there they would work their way through Japanese-held territory to reach friendly lines 40 miles to the north.

They did so with minimal suitable equipment... and with one dog, a spaniel named Bruce, whom the men could not bring themselves to leave behind.

Not so Sub Lt Lewis Bush of MTB 08 who felt compelled to kill his dog, Joan, before fleeing the colony. A chief petty officer killed the animal, before Bush himself laid her to rest.

“I dug her grave, my face streaming with tears, wrapped her in a small naval ensign, put her in a beer crate and heaped a mound of stones over her,” the junior officer recalled. “At that moment I hated the Japanese more I think than at any time during the war.”

The trek through the Chinese mainland was aided by guerrillas, although at one point the group was halted by villagers who demanded US \$25,000 to allow them to pass safely. In the end, thanks to the bartering efforts of the Chinese admiral – dressed in the uniform of a Royal Navy commander and carried in a sedan chair – the party got through for under £10.

When the escapees reached Chinese lines in Waichow – today Huizhou – on the Dong after four days of evading the Japanese, the welcome was ecstatic: a ‘mouth organ band’, youngsters, dogs, firecrackers accompanied the rag-tag group.

They were treated to a banquet, taught their hosts the phrase ‘Bottoms up’ and learned, in return, *yum sing* (cheers) during a rather lively reception which few men could remember the next day.

When heads recovered, they could provide among the first concrete information on the fall of Hong Kong – and reassurance to families half a world away: the local newspaper in AB Jack Holt's home town hailed ‘Burnley sailor in Hong Kong escape’, for example.

Chan Chak would prove a useful ally in the ongoing fight against the Japanese, the majority of the British members of the escape party would fight in Europe. Most kept quiet about their deeds and their dramatic flight, except perhaps recounting the story to their families in later life.

Thanks to Tim Luard this remarkable story now has the much wider audience it deserves.

RECENTLY in this column I reviewed an excellent book that explained how the British won the war of 1812. This was a detailed account of blockade operations, writes Prof Eric Grove of the University of Salford.

Now the story of this victorious war has been more comprehensively told in Professor Andrew Lambert's **The Challenge: Britain against America in the Naval War of 1812** (Faber and Faber £20 ISBN 978-0-571-27319-5).

This puts the war in its context, both of the aggressive, expansionist policy of the Jeffersonian Republicans and the great world war against Napoleon that was Britain's major preoccupation.

Britain tried hard to avoid war but the opportunity created by Napoleon's invasion of Russia to take Canada was just too tempting for the Americans. No matter that Britain had revoked the orders in council that had provided the pretext for war.

British operations, commanded initially by the unjustly-maligned Admiral Warren, were limited in part by a desire not to be too provocative towards the Americans so that the many who stood to lose by the war might cause more moderate counsels to prevail in Washington.

The Americans, however, seemed to do well – at sea at least – in the opening engagements. The large and powerful frigate USS Constitution defeated the decaying and 50-per-cent-smaller former French prize HMS Guerriere after what Prof Lambert describes as “a creditable performance” by the British crew.

Then the sloop USS Wasp took the little brig HMS Frolic as the latter covered the scattering of her convoy; the American ship was so badly damaged however that she had to surrender almost immediately to a covering British ship of the line.

In a second frigate action another large frigate, the United States, defeated the badly-handled (and much smaller) frigate HMS Macedonian whose morale had been sapped by incompetent senior officers. Macedonian was brought into New York to general American rejoicing.

Then Constitution once more found a relatively easy target, HMS Java, which was eventually defeated but not before so seriously damaging the US frigate that it had to abandon its raiding cruise.

The Admiralty considered the action had been well handled and Java's senior surviving officer Lt Henry Chads became the Royal Navy's leading gunnery specialist.

Finally in February 1813 the USS Hornet, commanded by Capt James Lawrence sank a not very powerful British brig HMS Peacock that had neglected its gun drills.

It is largely upon these highly equivocal single ship victories of trivial strategic significance that the legend of American ‘victory’ in this war rests. They did nothing to counter the growing blockade of the American coast. They did not prevent the reinforcement of Canada. They did not interfere with British trade. In any case, the



● The frigate USS President overwhelms the small sloop HMS Belt; the 1811 action was one which helped to light the touchpaper for the War of 1812

## GROVE REVIEW

tide swiftly turned in the single-ship stakes.

On June 1 1813 Capt Philip Broke of HMS Shannon smashed Lawrence's new command, the frigate USS Chesapeake. British gunnery was such that the battle was over in a few minutes. Lawrence's famous cry “Don't give up the ship!” was ignored.

Broke was seriously wounded aboard Chesapeake, probably by British deserters in the American crew, but it was a signal defeat, explained away later by some rather disgraceful American scapegoating and lies. Chesapeake was towed in triumph to Halifax. America's earlier victories made the shock all the greater at home.

In August 1813 the brig HMS Pelican took the raider USS Argus, and in March 1814 USS Essex was taken by HMS Phoebe, destroying the American threat in the Pacific.

Then the British squadron off New York foiled the large frigate USS President's attempt to break out, the fast frigate Endymion converting the American ship into a shattered and sinking wreck. President was towed to Bermuda, then to Britain where she was copied, her successor being used later in the 19th Century to remind Americans of the disadvantages of confronting the world's greatest maritime empire.

Even the Constitution had a lucky escape from some powerful new British frigates; if she had been taken the persistent lie of American victory would have been impossible to sustain.

It was hard enough as it was. Raiding forces of increasing strength – as troops could be diverted from Europe – struck along the American coast, most notably capturing and burning Washington and its ‘Executive Mansion’ forcing the coat of white paint that still persists.

The British commitment, however,

has been a success, a similar trial with larger RN warships did not go down so well.

Childs points out that the over-riding fear – one shared by not a few in the Senior Service – is that for the past decade the Royal Navy has put all its eggs in, if not one, then three baskets: Type 45s, carriers, Astutes. It has sacrificed *a lot* for these ‘big ticket’ projects. “The most uneasy of the Navy's supporters fear... it will end with a little of everything, but not enough of anything to be a credible force.”

Indeed, Childs writes his book at a moment when the Fleet is smaller than it has ever been in living memory – at around 35,000-strong “the entire Royal Navy could fit into one mid-size Premier League football stadium. It is significantly smaller than, for example, the Arcadia retail group which owns Top Shop.”

But that is not to say that it is all bleak. The author paints a picture of a world a decade hence, with fewer US carrier battle-groups and the world's greatest power being heavily tied down in the Pacific. Instead of the Abraham Lincoln or Ronald Reagan prowling the Arabian Sea, sending F18s aloft, it is the Prince of Wales battle-group with its F35 Lightning IIs.

Of course, that could be more Tom Clancy than real world, but *Britain's Future Navy* raises pertinent questions on almost every page. Many cannot be answered – or at least not yet. As Childs points out, it may be 50 years' time or more before we can finally pass judgment on the effectiveness (or otherwise) of the new carriers.

The biggest question of all: whether the RN? Is it “in the late stages of a long, long decline”? Will it turn into “just another relatively ordinary, small-to-medium-sized navy, albeit with extraordinary traditions and professional standards”?

Or does it stand on the eve of a re-birth, when the government and people realise the need for seapower, when it is able to contribute a force “of a type and scale that Britain has not been able to deploy for decades”?

# Whither the Senior Service?

HAVING provided an outstanding overview of the Royal Navy's mission over the past three decades, veteran BBC correspondent Nick Childs has now turned to the Fleet of today and tomorrow.

**Britain's Future Navy** (Pen & Sword, £19.99 ISBN 978-1848-842915) is effectively a collection of penetrating essays on issues affecting strategy, long-term planning and equipment from the future carriers and F35 Joint Strike Fighters to Type 45 destroyers, manpower issues, potential operations and global partnerships.

This is a book which should provoke debate within and without the RN... and it should be on the bookshelf of every sailor and Royal Marine with a vested interest in the Senior Service of tomorrow.

Childs brings 30 years' experience working for the BBC around the globe to the table – and it shows. Few, if any, mainstream journalists better understand defence, foreign policy and political issues. It makes him one of the most astute (no pun intended) judges of today's Royal Navy.

Thus he sets the mission and machines of today's RN in context of its global counterparts (especially the US Navy). The seas of the future will become, if not crowded, then at least ploughed by new or upcoming navies: Brazil, Turkey, South Africa, South Korea and “the game changers” India and China.

In this changing world, suggests Childs, why not keep a Bay-class and frigate permanently on station in the Indian Ocean, attach a Type 45 and an Astute-class submarine to the US Fleet in the Pacific, base ships in Mumbai, Mombasa, Diego Garcia, or Gibraltar instead of Devonport where “they would be quickly available for operations in the Atlantic and the Mediterranean in the manner of the dashing Force H”.

Certainly the concept of extended deployments or basing ships abroad has been tried with mixed results. While the long-term presence of minehunters in the Gulf, using Bahrain as a base, and rotation of small-ship crews through these vessels and survey ships







# Marines throw down the gauntlet

**TWO-HUNDRED and fifty six** Royal Marine commandos deployed to Virginia on a sports tour that saw the green berets take on their United States Marine Corps (USMC) counterparts in 16 different sports, all along the Eastern Seaboard of the US.

Exercise Virginia Gauntlet featured a mixture of sports loved by Brits (cricket, rugby union) and those loved by Americans (basketball) and those loved on both sides of the Atlantic (swimming, hockey, football, shooting, and martial arts) during two weeks of competition.

Organiser Maj Paul Curry said that the idea of the competition came from a conversation he had with a group of older bootnecks who recalled the last major sports tour in 1994.

"The standard and age ranges of the team members was diverse and I was very clear that it was important to include a broad spectrum of ranks, age ranges and experience in order to raise the profile of sport in the Royal Marines and offer an opportunity to further nurture Royal Marines sport at grass roots level," he explained.

He added that the tour has already uncovered some talented performers, and that there would be a lasting legacy of good memories and firm friendships.

## Day ONE

The Deputy Commandant General RM, Brigadier Paul Denning, officially welcomed his Royal Marines to the USMC base in Quantico and said: "The principal aim is to re-establish sport on the Corps calendar of events."

"We have been very busy for the

past ten years with land operations in Iraq and Afghanistan without much downtime, and we are very keen to get our marines back onto the sports field and to enjoy themselves.

"Sport is entirely relevant to military operations as well, and it is exactly what the origins of sport were – training for war."

He added: "The legacy is that the young marines understand that the Corps is not 'just' about operations, and you must have a balance in your life, and sport is a key part of this."

## Day TWO

The tour got off to a winning start on the **cricket** pitch for the green berets when they comfortably beat a Washington Embassy XI in Maryland.

The Embassy elected to bat, and although Nasir of Pakistan made a fine half-century, the bowlers – led by 19-year-old Mne Clift (42 Cdo), with five wickets for 31 runs – kept a tight rein on the diplomats and restricted their score to 183 all out in 37 overs.

An unbeaten 56 from C/Sgt Needham and 53 from Cpl Pete Sewell helped the Brits on their way to a comprehensive seven wicket victory, finishing on 184 for 3.

The **football** (aka soccer) match against the Quantico Varsity USMC team ended with another resounding win for the green berets: 12-0.

## Day THREE

Next up **rugby union**, pitching the Royal Marines against the Mayor's Select XI in Alexandria, Virginia.

The locals, put together by an ex-pat New Zealander featured a number of Brits... who were no match for the Royals who triumphed 47 to 7.

The **football** pitch was centre stage again for the next round, with the RM up against the USS Truman's soccer team in the heat of Norfolk, Virginia. Despite the afternoon sun, the Royal Marines set up a run of goal-scoring opportunities, pulling together a comprehensive win 11-0.

After a series of sports that favoured their European cousins, the American marines must have been looking forward to the **basketball** match where the USMC Quantico All-Stars were waiting.

From the get-go, the USMC took the lead, and despite sterling efforts by the Royals and a final-quarter surge of scoring, the final tally was Quantico All Stars 100, Royal Marines 68.

Colombia Sports Complex was the location for the match between the Royal Marines and the New York City Field **Hockey** Club.

Despite the issues of a new squad and some new players to RM Hockey, the Royals quickly found their feet against their experienced opponents. But with some fine play and possession, the New Yorkers continuously shifted the ball across the pitch looking for gaps and weaknesses, but the Brits pushed back. However, although the RM side put up a strong fight with fine effort, the opposition came at them wave after wave, and the final score when the whistle blew was 4-3 to the Americans.

The **fencing** contest at the Liberty Fencing Club saw the Royals and one Naval Medical Assistant face up to both the US Navy and US Army on the piste.

## Day FOUR

Downtown Queens, New York, was the venue for the **taekwondo** competition against

some of New York's finest experts in the martial art. The sparring was electrifying and of high calibre. Only one Royal made it to the semi-final, Cpl Phil Tovey from 30 Cdo IX, and won respect from the London 2012 Olympian against whom he sparred.

You would have expected a slightly more dignified pace to the **golf** on the Medal of Honor course at Quantico against the USMC.

However the day started well when Capt Rasher Bacon RM opened proceedings with a road traffic accident at the site of the first tee; somehow he failed to see the four-foot long wooden bench, and stowed his buggy straight into the side of it – to the amusement of all on the tee, including the local garrison TV camera crew.

The **squash** team played their first fixture of the tour against the Meadow Hill Jesters in Baltimore, but sadly lost out to the home team. And they lost out again in their second fixture against the Midshipmen of the US Naval Academy.

The **archery** took place at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, against the USMC once more.

In bright sunshine and with barbecue provisions, the archers progressed through a woodland field archery course, shooting at 3D targets, followed by a regulation target shoot.

Heat and humidity took their toll on the archers, but despite the conditions, Mne York had a perfect round in the field event, taking the top place and winning the laurels as overall best archer.

## Day FIVE

Back to the homeground for the hometeam as the Royals faced up to their US Marine Quantico Base counterparts on

the **basketball** court at Quantico.

A strong lead by the US in the first quarter was chased down by the Brits to finish 38-39 at the second quarter.

The Americans pulled their lead further ahead by the end of the third, but the Royals came out fighting hard in the final quarter, racing towards a nail-biting finish with the Royal Marines four points adrift with 34 seconds to play.

At 29 seconds to play, the Royals were worse off at six points down. However a fierce burst of activity in the closing seconds eventually saw the Royal Marines pull ahead with two free shots in the very last seconds, and the game finishing RM 91-USMC 90.

A **cricket** match against Hampton Roads CC of the mid-Atlantic league saw the Royal Marines score 158 off their 20 overs, a tally that their rivals could not match and were dispensed all-out for 112.

## Day SIX

**Hockey** at the Baker Field Sports Complex saw the Royals line up against the no.1 team in the top division of the East Coast Field Hockey League, the Rye Field Hockey Club. Despite some strong play, the experienced US team held their cool, and netted a win 2-1.

Despite their successes the previous day, the Royal Marines were unable to pull off the win against the Quantico team again on the **basketball** court, and their performance dropped, leaving the Americans with a 88-55 triumph.

Back to shooting with the marines taking on the marines at **clay pigeon shooting**. The Brits were somewhat taken with the ease of purchasing 2,000 cartridges on American soil, and enjoyed a few days of sharpening their skills in

Quantico before heading on to a shooting ground in New York, with teams tackling the challenge of a 'Down the line' shoot. The Royals' successes included one first place, four second places and four third places.

The **cricket** team tackled a different Hampton Roads team, but once again pulled off a win with aplomb.

## Day SEVEN

The **soccer** pitch was the next crucible of action as the Royals took on the US Marine Corps All-Marine team at Sunny Lake Park in Virginia. The day before the British footballers had been the VIP guests at the Capitol Building of the Speaker of the House of Representatives Mr John A Boehner.

The Americans started strongly, but the British players dominated – perhaps assisted by the man of the match performance from former Liverpool FC professional Mne Michael Scott, who consolidated the Royals' 6-1 win.

It was New Jersey that played host to the next clash on the **squash** courts, where the Royals took on the Ivy League of Princeton University.

The Brits were smarting after three successive defeats – but sadly a barrage of strong players on the opposing team (which featured international players from Korea and the US) proved the pen mightier than the dagger, and it was another loss for the men in green.

■ Sadly, sports fans, space stopped play, so Virginia Gauntlet will return for its exciting climax in next month's **Navy News**. Featuring thrills, spills, Rocky Balboa and space shuttles. What more could you want?



Pictures: PO(Phot) Sean Cleve and Virginia Gauntlet participants



## A long way to the fairways

DESPITE some significant last-minute changes, the RN ladies golf team headed off on a 12-day tour of San Diego.

In liaison with the tour organiser, Lt Cdr Debra Vout, a Solheim Cup-style event was organised.

The competition was contested over four fixtures on the military Sea n' Air and Admiral Baker golf courses with points awarded for winning the front nine, back nine, as well as winning gross and net scores for each individual match.

The clear, sunny California weather was spoiled by unexpectedly low temperatures for the time of year.

The US turned out in their thermals whilst the RN donned their shorts and tee-shirts determined to make the most of the sunshine!

However, as the week progressed, America's 24/7 weather channel was completely accurate; torrential storms which had devastated parts of San Francisco in the previous days, headed south and finally hit SD midway through the tour.

Fortunately, there was minimal disruption to the fixture list with just one fixture cancelled and the second moved due to course flooding.

Each match was played in the best of spirits and strongly contested by both teams.

The lush, green fairways and glass-like greens were disrupted by the occasional extremely low-flying C130 or other military types of aircraft coming in to land on North Island's Naval Air Stations.

However, the concentration of the team remained steadfast, even when walking across the runway as these aircraft were coming in to land!

In the final match of the competition, newcomer, Lt Claire Thompson proved her potential as she went head-to-head against two opponents.

Unperturbed, Claire went on to win 13 of the 18 holes which ensured an overall victory for the RN over the USA, 48 points to 36.

An official photoshoot aboard the museum ship USS Midway was followed by a celebratory joint team dinner at the Kansas City Barbecue, where scenes for *Top Gun* were filmed. A perfect end to a well-fought competition.

Rounds were also played at Carmel Highland, Steele Canyon and Carmel Mountain Range courses which allowed the team to sample more of the superb golf which San Diego has to offer.

An individual tour championship competition was held on the beautiful, meandering course of Carmel Mountain Range which weaved its way around a rather exclusive housing community!

LPT Kerry Isbell just beat Lt Cdr Charlotte Bull as the overall winner with WO Julie Palmer picking up the prize for 'most played golf'.

To finish the tour, Ric Millen from the US Marine Corps Air Station Miramar organised a club invitational mixed event with more than 40 sailors, marines and civilian competitors taking part.

POPT Wendy Briggs and LA(Phot) Claire Myers and their playing partners proved far too strong for the rest of the field as they swept the board on prizes.

A truly fabulous tour, fully supported by the RN Sports Lottery, the RN/RM Charities, RINGA, welfare funds and individual player fines.

Thanks to all those who have backed the players, not only for this tour, but throughout the season, supporting 'time for sport as the ladies team has gone from strength to strength in recent years.

Finally, any ladies interested in taking up golf or who already play and want to join the RN team, contact Lt Cdr Lauren Hulston (MWC-CSAV Merlin SO2, 93825 5068).



Picture: Iain Weir/Rowing Photography

## Let's row the Thames (Part 1)

NOVEMBER to March saw the start of the Royal Navy High Performance rowing squad's long-distance head season.

Training on the Thames at Eton started with small boat work to develop and maintain technique, moving to fours and eights in preparation for the main event: the Head of the River Race on the Thames.

A healthy number of athletes enabled trials and new combinations to be formed with crew selections taking place to ascertain the fastest possible crew.

Two training races held at Hammersmith and Kingston for race practice were used to develop cohesion with good, positive feedback coming from all members of the boat.

The Head of the River Race was the culmination of the hard winter training. Raced over the famous 6.8km course on the Thames Tideway, weeks of hard work both on and off the water saw the Royal Navy fielding its strongest VIII in several years.

The eight athletes selected to represent the Service were Cox Lt Cdr John Frith (Dauntless), Lt Chris Cozens (MOD Abbey Wood), Surg Lt Cdr Andy Matheson (NME), Lt Roland Wilson (CTCRM), Lt Chris Matthews (824 NAS), Capt Richard Ellera RM (Defence School of Languages), AB Alex Collard RNR (HMS President), Lt Iain Giffin (HMS York) and Lt Simon Thompson (771 NAS).

In wet and windy conditions the crew produced a solid row, maintaining a good rhythm and a powerful stroke to complete the race, coming third in their category.

Lt Chris Cozens, men's squad captain and stroke, said: "It is always difficult to bring this number of rowers together from different areas of the country to enable valuable training and selection. It was worth it and I thank their dedication and determination".

With the Thames race done, the emphasis has shifted to the sprint and regatta season; Navy rowers will be taking part at the Joint Services Regatta and the most important rowing race in the calendar (bar the Olympics), Henley Royal Regatta.

## Let's row the Thames (Part 2)

WELL, canoe, strictly speaking...

At 9.08am on Easter Sunday, the White Ensign flew triumphantly over Westminster Bridge as brothers Lt Jonathan Bannister and Sub Lt Timothy Bannister achieved a commendable 32nd place in the 64th Devizes to Westminster 125-mile international canoe marathon, completing the course in 23h 38m.

They were beaten into 2nd place in the Royal Navy sub-class by Royal Marines Dave Ethell and Paul Baker with a time of 20h 42m.

Fellow Royal Marines Jon White and Lee John Waters, victims of an IED in Sangin in 2010, recorded a remarkable time of 28 hours.

This gruelling event lived up to its reputation as the 'canoeist's Everest'. Apart from negotiating 77 locks along the Kennet and Avon Canal and the River Thames, numerous swing bridges, facing the ever-present danger of capsizing, suffering the discomfiture of permanently sitting down in sodden kit and the cumulative effects of tiredness and fatigue; the absence of flow on the Thames meant that each canoeist's physical resources were stretched to the limit.

Not surprisingly a large proportion

of the 155 starters in the senior doubles class failed to complete the course.

Six months of arduous training, a superbly-coordinated support team of family and friends, and the generous loan of a canoe from REME, Arborfield, ensured that the Bannisters' consistent speed got them to Westminster inside the 'magical target' of 24 hours.

The pace dropped a little in the depths of night around Windsor, but with the approach of Teddington and the break of daylight, it was literally 'full-speed-ahead' for the 17-mile haul down the tideway.

The debris from the previous day's Boat Race fiasco was very evident as the crew passed through Putney.

And so to Westminster Bridge! The sight of supporters, well-wishers, friends and family crowding the balustrades inspired a final burst of speed.

The finishing whistle brought a wonderful sensation of relief and they drifted to the welcoming sight of dry land at Westminster Steps.

Elated and medalled, Jonathan and Timothy clambered on to the Embankment declaring loudly: "Never again!"



## A tale of missed opportunities

THE preliminary round of the England Hockey County Championships drew the RAF, Worcestershire, Wiltshire and Suffolk (the latter three all previous National County Champions) to take on the RN at Burnaby Road in Portsmouth.

With the promise of semi-finals in Sheffield and the final at the Olympic Park, the RN and RAF never had a better chance of national glory, writes Alan Walker RNHA.

The Royal Navy, as hosts, played in the first match against Wiltshire. Jolly good hosts they were too allowing Wiltshire's Ben Creedy and Ed Gosling to twice walk through a sleeping RN defence to put Wilts 2-0 up in under nine minutes.

That prompted a three-goal blitz from the RN until a 'return to sleep mode' for 3-3 which, despite a somewhat feisty final 25 minutes, turned out to be the final score. After the RAF and Worcestershire played out a 1-1 draw, the RN took to the field against Suffolk.

The experienced Capt Woody McInally RM had the ball in the Suffolk net inside three minutes.

This is it, one thought, but no! The RN switched back to obliging mode letting Suffolk in for two.

Lt Carl Perry, making a rare RN outing, worked his socks off to get on the end of a cross from his skipper Mark Stanton for the equaliser and a half-time score of 2-2.

After the break with the RN still relaxing, Ed Driver sneaked in beneath the Navy's radar to restore Suffolk's lead 3-2.

As if at will, a two minute laconic burst – first from the Fleet Air Arm's Mark Stanton and

then one from the red-haired jinker Jenkins, put the RN 4-3 with about 15 minutes left.

Time to shut up shop or maybe attack is the best form of defence?

Not a bit of it; the Navy drew it – or was that blew it – by letting in the vastly-experienced and much-travelled Duncan Parnis equalise with three minutes left.

Wiltshire dispatched Worcestershire 4-1 while the first day ended with a thrilling 4-4 draw between the RAF and Suffolk.

At the close of play, Wiltshire led with 4 points ahead of Suffolk, the RN and RAF in that order (on goals for) on two points each and Worcs bringing up the rear.

Day two opened with Suffolk taking apart Wiltshire 5-2 before the RN grappled with Worcestershire – and promptly emphasised their superiority by scoring nine goals – Luke Dalton (two), Craig Buchanan (one), Stanton (two), Jenkin (two), and young Inter-Services U23 hero Rich Fisher (two) – although they did leak three goals. Nevertheless, the 9-3 win gave the RN a plus-six goal difference along with five points.

The RAF responded by slamming seven past Wiltshire, then Suffolk did the same to Worcestershire. So going into the final match of the weekend, the RAF would need to beat the RN by three goals – or the Navy would need to beat the RAF by four goals – for one of them to top the group; a 1-0 or 2-0 win for either side would send the winner through to the semis in second place behind Suffolk. In the event of a draw, the RAF had a better goal difference (by just one goal).

Much to the delight of the RAF and the

chagrin of the RN, RAF skipper Rosie Oatley dribbled straight from the centre pass, all the way to the RN goal to place his shot past keeper Richard Smith still standing on his goal-line. It happened so quickly that the clock showed only 55 seconds at the subsequent restart; 1-0 to the RAF.

Once the Navy had recovered from the shock, up stepped the red-haired raider Jenkin; he seemed to go up two gears in pace and coolly put one past the RAF keeper Raval by his right-hand post.

On 26 minutes big Mark Dixon sallied forth upfield and unleashed one of his nuclear-powered efforts which was too high for the already-diving Raval in the RAF goal... and put the RN 2-1 up.

Scourge of the RN Richie Corbett bagged an equaliser five minutes before the break, prompting a return "we're not having any of this" mode for the Navy which resulted in a penalty corner put away by Gucci Moore or a 3-2 lead for the Senior Service at half time.

It took the Navy six minutes to forget their half-time chat; a hole opened up down the right side and the RAF's Ryan Casson put the ball past Smith to level at 3-3.

What followed was a game of two goalkeepers. Numerous short corners were awarded – and went begging. Both 'keepers were keeping everything out in an end-to-end finale.

Neither side could break the deadlock and the RAF are now Sheffield-bound courtesy of their superior goal difference... but, stop press, Suffolk may not be able to take up their place in the semis. If so the Navy might be travelling to Sheffield after all...

## Ladies on song at ping pong

ALL three Forces were represented by two men's and one ladies' team at the Inter-Service table tennis championships at HMS Temeraire.

Apparently the RAF has won the team event for at least the last 25 years (that's as far back as the records go!)

The Army's team were somewhat under strength this year due to operational commitments and the Navy A took full advantage, reaching their first final in as long as anyone could remember – at least 15 years.

Unfortunately there was no fairytale ending as the Air Force A triumphed 9-1 in a rather one-sided final.

In the ladies' team event, the RN managed to overcome a one-player shortfall to win in a hard fought round-robin and regain the trophy they last won in 2009.

The second day of the contest saw the singles and doubles competitions and as usual the RAF were dominant.

Sgt Donoghue took his 13th (and final title) as he leaves the RAF this year after 25 years of service.

AB(WS) Fallon Thompson retained her ladies title in a closely-matched final against a much more experienced opponent.

Other notable performances from Navy players were provided by AB Thompson and AB(WS) Jenna McBeth, cruising to victory in the ladies doubles, CPOET(ME) Daren Godden and AB McBeth losing a tight final in the mixed doubles, and Cdr Tim Currass winning the men's plate.

More details on RN ping pong from CPO Godden on 93843 6208/02392 546208 or e-mail [sultan-ctf8](mailto:sultan-ctf8).

## Goldman is top man

DESPITE miserable weather for most of May, sailors taking part in the Commander-in-Chief's Cup had a welcome break when perfect sailing conditions were delivered for a hard-fought team race in the upper reaches of Portsmouth Harbour.

An impressive fleet of 28 Bosun dinghies set sail from the RN Sailing Centre at Whale Island, representing Naval Headquarters, HMS Collingwood, HMS Blazer, the Maritime Warfare Centre and URNUs.

After an hour and a half of nip-and-tuck sailing, which included the obligatory capsize drill and a broken tiller, the eventual winning helmsman was Lt Cdr Paul Goldman who ensured that his team (Resource & Planning Division NCHQ) took first prize.

This was one of the many team and individual sailing events that take place throughout the season from the Whale Island facility.

The centre also delivers RYA level courses for dinghy and RIB certificates for naval personnel, supports adventurous training (including kayaking) and is open most evenings and on weekends.

There are opportunities for RN family members (especially kids) to make the most of this fantastic (and free) facility too. See [www.pdevportal.co.uk/sports/sailing\\_centre](http://www.pdevportal.co.uk/sports/sailing_centre) for further details

## Quay skills

IF YOU'VE got a head for heights, then the Quay Climbing Centre in Exeter is the place to be on June 20.

The centre is the venue for the 2012 RN and RM climbing championships.

All abilities are welcome in three disciplines: top roping, lead climbing and bouldering

More details are available from Lt Duncan Turner at [rockmonkey@gmail.com](mailto:rockmonkey@gmail.com) or [www.facebook.com/pages/RNRM-Mountaineering-Club/152990278060830](http://www.facebook.com/pages/RNRM-Mountaineering-Club/152990278060830)



# There's good news and there's bad...

THE bad? Well, the Army scored a clean sweep in the traditional bookend to the **rugby union** season with all three RN representative sides losing to the soldiers.

And the good? That same trio of RN teams – 1st XV, Ladies and Veterans – put the RAF to the sword.

Those victories over the Air Force (more about that later) meant the Senior Service faced the Army in a 'winner takes all' showdown at Kneller Hall and Twickenham Stadium on Saturday April 28.

For the first time in the history of the fixture there was a chance for the Royal Navy Rugby Union to win the Babcock Trophy with a clean sweep over the other two Services.

The first to fly the Navy flag were the Royal Navy Women and Mariners who kicked-off at Kneller Hall. Despite appalling weather conditions, an enthusiastic and sizeable crowd braved the elements to watch what would be two entertaining matches.

The Mariners took the lead with an early penalty but this was answered by the Army Masters with an unconverted try.

After half time the Mariners regained the lead with another penalty. The combination of injuries to a number of key players and two yellow cards meant that the Mariners had too much to do; the Masters managed to score two more converted tries to give them a 19-6 win.

The RN Women started their game well and kept the Army at bay with some outstanding defending.

However, the Army managed to find a gap in the defensive line to score a converted try. This was followed by another two unconverted tries to give the Army a 17-0 lead at half time. The Navy came back strongly in the second half to score a try of their own with some great forward play.

With fatigue setting in from constantly defending their line and also suffering a number of injuries, the RN women eventually capitulated.

The Army took advantage to score four more tries to maintain their winning record and win by 41 points to 5.

This left the Royal Navy two games down and no wins with only the RN Senior XV to play in the main stadium at Twickenham to save a whitewash in front of a 64,000-strong crowd.

The RN coaches had selected a young team, whereas the Army fielded a team full of experience.

This would pay dividends for the Army in the early engagements which saw them score through left wing, and eventual Man of the Match, Rokoduguni, who would go on to score a hat trick of tries.

However, the trusty boot of Navy skipper POAET Dave Pascoe (RNAS Culdrose) kept the Navy in the game.

The loss of Sgt Gaz Evans (1 ASRM) from the pivotal Number 8 position after ten minutes didn't help the Navy cause. The Army continued to pressure the Navy out wide, which again led to more tries: half time score 19-6.

Injuries to both centres ET (ME) Dale Sleeman (HMNB Devonport) and AB Darren Bamford (HMS Dragon) meant that the Navy had to re-arrange their back line.

This resulted in Mne Jack Foster (40 Cdo) gaining his first Senior XV cap and also becoming the 700th capped Navy player.

The Army continued to score on a regular basis, giving them an eventual winning margin of 48-9.



● He ain't heavy... NA(AH) Joji Quarnivalu (RNAS Culdrose) towers above his team-mates as he's lifted up to win a line out

Picture: PO(Phot) Paul A'Barrow, RNAS Culdrose

"The score does not do justice to a young Navy team, a team that has seen 11 new caps this season; they never gave up and continued to battle to the end," said RN director of rugby Lt Cdr Andy Kellett.

"This was one of the most experienced Army teams I have seen for many years, when you have the likes of Chris Budgen (Exeter Chiefs) and former England 7s International Isoa Damudamu on the bench you know it is going to be a difficult afternoon."

And now to that unprecedented triple triumph over the RAF in Portsmouth.

The RN-RAF tie at Burnaby Road was not going to be an easy game as weather conditions throughout the day were as bad as they could be: high winds and intermittent downpours did not augur well for open, flowing rugby.

The RN were first to score from a penalty which was converted by POAET Dave Pascoe (RNAS

Culdrose) but this was cancelled out by RAF fly half Cpl Phil Thomas, who converted an RAF penalty (3-3).

Three minutes later, however, the Navy again took the lead as Pascoe converted another penalty (6-3), which remained the score at half time.

The second half saw lots of action but little to enthuse the crowd as the weather conditions started to impact on every facet of play.

The RN were reduced to 13 men for a period as the referee yellow-carded two Navy players in quick succession for an off-the-ball incident and repeated infringements.

The game suddenly ignited as first the RAF levelled the score with a drop goal (6-6). The RN responded from the restart and put together a passage of play that saw ET(WE) Ian Cooper (HMS Ambush) score under the posts, Pascoe converted the try to make

the final score 13-6.

Lt Cdr Kellett said: "We had few chances and the conditions did not help to turn chances in to tries."

"The RAF should take heart from their performance as over the last few years they have been on the receiving end of some heavy defeats."

Before the main event, there were two other matches to be contested. The first saw the RN women take on their RAF counterparts, promptly beating the Air Force for only the fourth time in their 11 meetings (7-5).

The second game saw the two veterans' sides – RN Mariners and RAF Vultures – clash. The Mariners' last meeting with the RAF Vultures at Newbury a year ago provided a try fest as the Senior Service ran out 40-3 winners.

This year conditions served as a leveller, but the Mariners still triumphed 25-11.



Picture: PO(Phot) Emz Nolan, CTCRM

## Wheel-meet again at Lympstone

FOR the third time in four years the Royal Navy-Royal Marines Cycling Association **mountain bike** championships returned to Woodbury Common near Lympstone.

It's a venue, writes *WO2 Jim Kelly CTCRM*, known to both Royal Marines and keen mountain bikers alike.

The common has lots to offer: well-drained soil, challenging climbs, sinuous single track and a certain type of gorse bush that leaves a lasting reminder for all those unfortunate to encounter it.

Organised by the RM PT2 course as part of their final assessment, the event visited some of the more memorable parts of the endurance course as it snaked its way around the common.

The promise of a serious course and first-class organisation lured 43 riders to the South-west, including plenty of riders for whom this was their first outing on a mountain bike with a race number on the front. The Army deployed a couple of riders and the RAF sent six riders, four of whom were their 'A' team.

Being well-drained and without any really long hills, the course was fast and flowing, and the top guys were expected to lap the 4.2-mile loop in under 25 minutes; it would be a four-lap race for the experienced riders and three laps for the women and novices.

From the off, the RAF showed their form, leading the pack from the gun. The pace was fast at the front, but pretty soon settled into a rhythm with only Capt Ryan Kestle able to make headway, moving up from 11th on the opening lap to finish sixth.

Further back in the pack, riders found themselves swapping places as the odd sneaky climb caught out the unsuspecting, or those with tired legs struggled to ride out of the 'Endurance Course'.

Cpl Dan Lewis of the RAF took the overall win with four laps in under 1h 20m, from Sgt Ross Mallen (also RAF) in second, with the rest of the top ten: L/Cpl Clipstone (Army) third, Maj Andy Plewes (RM) fourth, Cpl Richardson (RAF) fifth, Capt Kestle (RM) 6th, Sgt Ollie Yates (RM) 7th, PO Rob Smith eight CPO Wood ninth and Lt Edmondson RN (MOD London) tenth.

Once the 'guests' were removed from the results, Maj Plewes took home the bulk of the silverware as first RNRMCA member, veteran, Royal Marines and RNRMCA champion. Wtr Juliette Long took the title in the women's event.

Thanks to Certini.co.uk and shred.cc everyone went home with something more than just Woodbury gorse rash, as they provided goody bags for all.

Mark Shoesmith of TheCreakingcrank.co.uk made sure no-one was mechanically challenged by offering onsite bike fettling and with podium prizes from southforkracing.co.uk and purpleharry.co.uk, as well as the traditional silver and glassware, the winners had something to show for their troubles, a good day's racing was had by all.

Podium positions are below; full results and pictures from the event will be on [www.navycycling.org.uk](http://www.navycycling.org.uk) in due course.

Navy Championships: 1 Maj Andy Plewes (NCHQ), 2 Capt Ryan Kestle (CTCRM), 3 Sgt Ollie Yates (40 Cdo)

Royal Marines' Championships: 1 Maj Plewes, 2 Capt Kestle, 3 Sgt Yates

Seniors: 1 Capt Kestle, 2 Sgt Yates, 3 Sgt Beeston (CTCRM)

Veterans: 1 Maj Plewes, 2 PO Rob Smith (HMS Vivid), 3 CPO Wood (SFM Devonport)

Open Race: 1 Cpl Dan Lewis (RAF), 2 Sgt Ross Mallen (RAF), 3 L/Cpl Clipstone (Army)

## Fantastic four lift 'n' shift

The Royal Navy sent four of its best to British Drug Free **Powerlifting** Associations

National Championships in Glasgow to compete with more than 60 other athletes – including two soldiers and three RAF lifters.

In the 90kg class the RN had the impressive youngster Mike Hawkins with a squat of 170kg, bench press of 127.5kg and a deadlift of 215kg (setting a new RN junior record in the process): total 512.5kg, placing him second as a junior, eighth overall.

Also at 90kg was stalwart Chris 'Doc' Martin who achieved a squat of 192.5kg, bench press of 130kg, and deadlift of 230kg for a 552.5kg total making him fourth in the open age category, fifth overall in the 90s.

In the 75kg class, the mighty Sam Dew managed an impressive

squat of 205kg, bench press 145kg and deadlift 230kg for a 580kg total and third place in the open age class and overall.

The runaway winner was the Herculean Mark Fleming in the 75kg class.

Mark achieved a frankly staggering squat of 235kg, bench press of 162.5kg and a phenomenal deadlift of 265kg for a 657.5kg total, with both the deadlift and total being new world records – and all his lifts being new RN records. Mark also took the best male lifter trophy.

Each member of the RN team lifted well enough to secure a chance to lift at the World Championships in October.

For more information on RN Powerlifting try [Royal Navy Powerlifting Association RNPA](http://www.navynews.co.uk) on Facebook.



# JUNGGLIES 1962-2012



● A Whirlwind of 846 Squadron over the jungle of South-East Asia in March 1964

**T**HIS year marks the 50th anniversary of the formation of 846 Naval Air Squadron in the Jungle role – Commando Support, a role which the squadron continues to perform to this day, *writes Barry (Baz) Marshall, Secretary 846 Squadron (1962-64) Association.*

Back in 1962 the squadron started to form up at RN Air Station Culdrose during the first four months of the year, and was officially commissioned on May 8 – around a month after sister squadron 845 – with six Westland Whirlwind HAS7 aircraft, 13 officers and 50 ratings.

That summer and autumn were spent in work-up along with 845 Squadron with their new Westland Wessex HAS1 aircraft, involving exercises with the Royal Marines and some Army units.

Both squadrons embarked on HMS Albion, newly converted to a commando carrier, in early November 1962 for a worldwide tour of duty due to last 18 months – but that was soon to change dramatically.

The ship's first port of call was Gibraltar, a customary stopping-off point for all warships entering the Mediterranean, and then on to Libya for the first exercise with 45 Commando Royal Marines, the embarked unit.

In this environment it was now obvious to see why all the squadron aircraft were painted stone or sand colour – they blended in very well!

But the real eye-opener for the ground crew was the amount of additional work created by working in desert conditions, when sand gets everywhere.

This exercise also enabled the squadron to get accustomed to being on its own, away from all the comforts of the ship – a way of life all were to become very used to.

Having passed through the Suez Canal, Albion then entered Aden to officially relieve HMS Bulwark.

The two ships were moored offshore in line astern, Albion to the rear. The ship's company of Bulwark took great delight

**THE Junglies this year celebrate 50 years of supporting the Royal Marines. To mark the anniversary, Navy News looks back to 846 Naval Air Squadron in the early 1960s, and traces the history of 846 and her Commando Helicopter Force sisters, 845, 847 and 848, to the present day**

in gathering on the flight deck round-down and singing "We'll be home for Christmas".

History tells us that 1962-63 was a particularly hard winter in the UK – hope they enjoyed it...

Whilst in Aden there was some swapping around of units between the two ships and the shore, with Albion departing for Kenya with 40 Cdo RM now on board.

Another shore-based exercise was undertaken in the Kenyan hinterland around Malindi – more desert – before calling in to Mombasa.

The stay there was prematurely ended and the ship set sail for Singapore at full speed.

En route the Captain of Albion addressed the ship's company and explained to all the reason for this sudden departure.

There had been an armed uprising in Brunei and the Sultan had asked for military assistance from Britain; the carrier force was to be that assistance.

At that time many had never even heard of Brunei...

After a short stay – hours rather than days – in Singapore to take on additional equipment and elements of 42 Cdo RM, the ship

sailed for the coast of Borneo.

By December 15 1962 the ship was off Seria where 846 was disembarked to Brunei Airfield.

The airfield taxiway became the dispersal and tents were erected on a nearby piece of land which was rumoured to be a 'dried up' riverbed.

During that first night the monsoon season introduced itself and much of the hours of darkness were spent frantically digging trenches around each individual tent to aid the water run-off and keep it out of the tents. Perhaps this was a riverbed after all...

Of course, in those days only aircrew carried arms, so anyone doing guard duty felt somewhat disadvantaged with the standard pickaxe handle, torch and whistle – thank goodness for the perimeter guard provided by the ever-reliable Gurkhas.

Operations in Brunei entailed a very fast learning curve with regard to both flying in such a heavily forested area, and maintaining the aircraft without

the benefit of hangar space.

The effects of the heavy daily rainfall coupled with daytime heat and constant high humidity meant extra effort was needed to keep all systems serviceable.

The aircraft were regularly washed and then covered with WD40 to help combat corrosion, and rotor heads and tail rotors were purged with grease on a daily basis.

To provide some protection, covers were fitted to the aircraft when not flying or being serviced.

The fitting of covers soon became routine, but a chore no-one enjoyed very much.

The wet conditions created some very specific problems.

Having no mechanised refuelers, refuelling was from 45-gallon drums using, in those early days, a handmade pump which utilised a double action bilge pump.

The drums, despite being sealed, suffered from the ingress of water as they had been stored

outdoors in an upright position.

So, prior to use, each one had to be checked for water content using a suitable length of wood with detection paste applied to the end, and the aircraft fuel filters were checked daily for any evidence of water in the fuel system.

It was realised early on that storing the fuel drums on their sides helped to prevent any water ingress.

The problem with water first manifested itself when one of the aircraft, XN387, was forced to carry out an emergency landing in a jungle clearing shortly after taking off from the dispersal in the penultimate day of 1962.

It was caused by engine failure due to water contamination, and the resulting heavy landing caused the rotor blades to sever the tail boom. The helicopter was airlifted to be repaired at Singapore via Brunei airfield and HMS Albion.

There was another accident in Brunei; this time one of the aircraft (XN309) had a tail rotor strike whilst landing in a clearing a week before Christmas 1962, caused by a tree stump hidden in long grass.

With no other access other than

by air, the Whirlwind was stripped of as much as was possible and recovered by air to Albion, the squadron's own aircraft carrying the component parts, including rotor blades, and the aircraft itself being lifted out by a twin-rotor Belvedere of 66 Squadron RAF.

The success of moving troops by air across the jungle resulted in a fairly rapid resolution of the uprising and the squadron returned to Albion early one misty morning.

The ship had by now earned the nickname 'The Grey Ghost of the Borneo Coast', having materialised at several points around the coast, usually overnight, appearing out of the early morning mist.

The aircraft were subsequently disembarked to RN Air Station Sembawang (Singapore) to catch up on urgent servicing requirements, but they were soon to be back on board and off to Labuan, an island off Brunei.

The stay was short-lived and we re-embarked for passage to Hong Kong.

Whilst there a number of exercises were carried out in the New Territories, but when off duty everyone of course got to sample the delights of Hong Kong.

The term 'Jungle Squadron' became a common tag for both squadrons aboard Albion, and 846 had adopted the palm tree as its emblem.

Whilst in Hong Kong the USS Frank E Evans, known to the US Navy as 'The Palm Ship', presented the Commanding Officer with a potted palm tree, last seen in the grounds of Admiralty House in Hong Kong.

846 Squadron returned to Brunei to support British and Malaysian forces involved in the war between Malaysia and Indonesia, the latter attempting to invade those states in Borneo which were part of Malaysia.

On this deployment we had the luxury of being accommodated in a 'longhouse' which had been built on the old campsite.

Our stay was once again short-lived though as, following a request for closer helicopter support, it was deemed more practical for us to deploy to Kuching in the state of Sarawak, putting the aircraft



● Westland Whirlwind HAS7 XN309 of 846 NAS – this aircraft was damaged when its tail rotor hit a tree stump south of Limbang in December 1962

Graphics: Andy Brady



that much closer to the military units involved.

The move was undertaken in three elements.

The aircraft flew direct to Kuching, via pre-arranged fuel dumps along the coast, and most of the ground crew were airlifted by Valetta transport aircraft of 50 Squadron RAF, with the heavy stores and some ground crew travelling by Royal Marines landing craft via the rivers and along the coast.

Once again the squadron was based on the local airfield – just a single runway and primitive dispersal in front of the control tower.

Our hard-standing was newly created and consisted of cleared scrubland overlaid with Sommerfield metal tracking.

The necessary command post, briefing room and stores facility were all housed in tents to one side of the dispersal.

The living accommodation this time was in 'attap' huts, made from local bamboo materials with thatched roofs, in Semengo Camp, a former Japanese POW camp from World War 2.

The camp was at that time run by the Irish Hussars, an armoured regiment with whom we struck up a good relationship and often stayed at their outposts whilst deployed 'up country'.

The huts were raised off the ground to deter snakes and rats, but the latter became a bit of a problem during our stay.

Following the takeover of the camp by 40 Cdo RM a move was made to try to solve the problem of these pests, but the situation was not helped by the local 'pest controller' wanting to place pythons in each of the huts.

Needless to say, the camp commander declined the offer...

Operations at Kuching centred on a number of tasks – reconnaissance, troop movement, casevac (casualty evacuation) and resupply – the aircraft departing early in the morning and usually returning at dusk.

This meant day-to-day maintenance was carried out at night under portable lighting and torches.

Unfortunately the local insect population preferred nocturnal activity and discovered that there was a ready food supply working in close proximity to these lights – the mosquitoes were particularly bad.

A couple of the aircraft suffered engine failures whilst deployed, one carrying out an emergency landing whilst carrying Gurkhas.

The aircraft landed on a cliff-top close to the border, so it was deemed prudent to recover it to a nearby village before attempting any repair.

All aspects of the recovery were carried out by air as previously, involving our own aircraft and Belvederes of the RAF.

A crew was flown in with the necessary spares and the repair carried out in the open, much to the amusement of the local natives.

On another occasion an engine change was carried out in a village with the replacement engine being flown in by Belvedere, the only access route, and the defective one



● Whirlwinds of 846 NAS over Brunei, the airfield of which was home to the squadron from December 1962

lifted out to Kuching.

The engine change was aided by a detachment of Royal Marines and a truck-mounted, hand-operated hoist which they happened to have with them.

Without aids like that the engines would have had to have been manhandled into place.

Towards the end of 1963 846 had another short respite back on board Albion, during which time some extensive maintenance was carried out to all aircraft.

Another visit to Hong Kong was undertaken, this time over Christmas, but true to form the stay there was cut short early in the New Year due to increased activity by Indonesian forces.

So it was back to Borneo, this time to Tawau, a coastal town and port in North Borneo.

Yet another airstrip, but this

one had a dirt runway, our hard-standing once again being Sommerfield tracking, and we were sharing it with RAF and Army Air Corps fixed-wing aircraft.

The accommodation for squadron personnel was initially in a local school, but once the holidays were over everyone moved to a tented camp on the nearby football pitch.

Operations were much the same as those experienced in the other locations – trips 'up country' supporting the activities of Army units, predominately Gurkhas, casevacs and resupply.

Squadron personnel managed to get involved in some sport – 846 had its own football team, and rugby was played in an 845/846 combined team.

But by far the most common

game played when off duty was the ever-popular volleyball.

Whilst at Tawau the Captain of HMS Albion flew in to see us a couple of times, but on the final visit it was to break the news that the ship was departing for home waters – and that the squadron would not be on board.

Much doom and gloom prevailed, and a general feeling that everyone would be stuck there indefinitely was rife, but it was not to be.

In April 1964 there was a changeover of personnel, with the air and ground crews flying back to UK via a short stay in Singapore.

On arrival in the UK a short weekend of leave was granted before all the squadron personnel rejoined the Albion in Plymouth.

It was then on to the ship's home port of Portsmouth where, after anchoring off, and families



● Whirlwinds of 846 Squadron on board HMS Albion in late 1963

embarking, 846 Squadron was presented with the prestigious Boyd Trophy in recognition of its work during the 18-month deployment.

On this high note, there was then more leave for everyone before taking up new posts, as determined by Drafty.

An association has been formed by those who served on that deployment, and they continue to hold annual reunions in September every year.

846 was first commissioned in the United States on April 1 1943 at Naval Air Station Quonset Point in Rhode Island, where squadron personnel were first acquainted with their 12 new Grumman Avenger aircraft.

The newly-formed torpedo bomber reconnaissance squadron returned to the UK in July that year with HMS Ravager, and a fighter flight of four Wildcats was added later that year.

Convoy escort work and operations off Norway were undertaken in the latter stages of the war, but a plan to deploy to the Far East after VE Day was abandoned and on September 22 1945 846 ceased to exist as the unit was redesignated 751 NAS, a trials squadron.

After reforming as a Jungle squadron, as recounted above, 846 disbanded in Singapore on October 19 1964, but less than four years later it reappeared at RN Air Station Culdrose (July 29 1968) as the Commando HQ

squadron with Wessex helicopters.

Disbanding again on December 17 1975 at Yeovilton, 846 reformed once again at the same location on April 1 the following year from elements of the disbanded 848 NAS.

846 was folded into 845 at Yeovilton on September 5 1977, and although it reformed as a separate unit the following day it was as a non-flying maintenance group, and it lost its number again the following month as it was renamed the Naval Air Command Squadron Support Unit.

But it emerged as a fully-fledged squadron again on October 4 1978 at Yeovilton, beginning to re-equip with Sea Kings in December 1979.

846 embarked in April 1982 with the Falklands task group, the bulk being with HMS Hermes but other elements deploying in HM ships Fearless and Intrepid, SS Canberra and MV Norland, and played a crucial role in the San Carlos landings in May 1982 and the push towards Stanley the following month.

The squadron returned to the UK in July the same year.

Since then 846 has mirrored the efforts of sister squadron 845, operating in Northern Ireland and Bosnia (1990s), Iraq (until 2007) and in Afghanistan (from 2008), to say nothing of exercises at sea and by land in the UK and overseas, including Norway, Kenya, Morocco and the USA.



● A Whirlwind of 846 NAS supports UK forces at Pang Tabang



## Falklands dash to

WHILE 845 and 846 Naval Air Squadrons formed up as torpedo bomber reconnaissance squadrons in the USA in early 1943, 847 followed suit in the domestic setting of Lee-on-Solent on June 1 the same year.

Equipped with Fairey Barracuda IIs, the squadron worked-up in Scotland then sailed with HMS Illustrious to the Indian Ocean at the end of the year, taking part in a raid on Sabang in Sumatra in April 1944.

At the end of June that year 847 was absorbed into 810 NAS at Trincomalee, and remained dormant until it reformed from a fragment of 812 NAS at Eglinton (Londonderry) in Northern Ireland on March 17 1956.

Now operating three anti-submarine Fairey Gannet AS1s, the squadron flew out to Nicosia in Cyprus, arriving on April 8, and spent the next three-and-a-half years patrolling the waters round the island looking for arms smugglers.

The squadron re-equipped with the improved Gannet AS4 in June 1958, and flew back to the UK to disband in Yeovilton on December 1 1959.

Its next incarnation was as a

Commando helicopter squadron, being formed on May 7 1963 when 848 NAS was split.

847 formally commissioned just over a week later with a dozen Westland Whirlwind HAS7s, training pilots for the ongoing operations in Indonesia.

In 1964 the squadron's B Flight spent some time embarked in HMS Bulwark, exercising with Royal Marines in the Far East.

But this phase of the squadron's life was again brief, as it disbanded once more, on December 2 1964, when its advanced and operational flying training duties for the Commando aviators were taken over by 707 NAS, flying Wessex HU5s out of Culdrose.

848 Squadron was again split on March 14 1969 to give 847 a new lease of life, this time operating ten Wessex HU5s as a helicopter support unit out of Sembawang in Singapore.

The squadron took part in a number of exercises, joining HM ships Albion and Fearless and RFA Sir Galahad.

Squadron aircraft also flew from HMS Bulwark in 1970, and helped with flood relief efforts

in Pakistan in November and Malaysia two months later.

On May 22 1971 the unit's aircraft returned to 848 NAS and the squadron was disbanded once more.

Its next appearance was brief but highly effective – 847 was reactivated at short notice at Culdrose on May 7 1982 from elements of 771 and 772 Squadrons giving it more than 20 Wessex HU5 aircraft.

The squadron started its journey south to the Falklands within a week, travelling with RFA Engadine and SS Atlantic Causeway, arriving in the Falklands area at the end of May.

847 NAS initially operated from San Carlos and provided vital air support to UK forces.

After the unofficial surrender of Argentine forces, 847 NAS relocated to Navy Point, a headland across the harbour directly to the north of Stanley, where it was based in what had previously been used as support and storage buildings for RN expeditionary vessels.

847 remained in the Falklands until September 1982, providing an air service to the military and locals – it was not unheard of for the squadron's helicopters to move livestock on occasions,

The squadron was one of the



● Whirlwind XN387 after crash landing with water contamination of the fuel tank in December 1962



# Squadron celebrates jubilee

THE first Jungle unit to form up was 845 Naval Air Squadron, which celebrated 50 years as a Commando helicopter squadron on April 10 this year.

To celebrate the anniversary the squadron hosted 50 guests, including past Commanding Officers and pilots at the unit's home base, RN Air Station Yeovilton.

After being welcomed by Cdr James Newton, 845's Commanding Officer, the guests received an insight into what the squadron has been up to in recent years, then ventured out to watch the famous Junglie assault demonstration.

Cdr Newton later outlined the history of 845 as a Commando squadron, and the importance that he placed on its heritage, saying: "The ethos of the Junglie aviator was born in the skies over Borneo, and shaped during conflicts in Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Sierra Leone and Iraq.

"This ethos remains alive and well in the hugely demanding environment of Afghanistan – the transition has been almost seamless."

Amongst the highlights for those gathered was Harry Benson recalling tales of being a young sub-lieutenant flying around low-level in the Falklands with his

comrades dodging bullets from Argentine guns, and bombs from their jet aircraft.

Capt Alan Hensher, the first CO of 845 as a Commando helicopter squadron, recounted his experiences of taking the first helicopters into Borneo, flying in the jungle, having to adjust tactics and procedures on a daily basis, so steep was the learning curve.

845 first officially formed on February 1 1943 as a torpedo bomber reconnaissance squadron at Quonset Point in Rhode Island flying the Grumman Avenger, blazing a trail which sister squadron 846 followed some two months later.

The squadron saw active service in the Far East before being disbanded in October 1945.

Reformed in March 1954 at Gosport as an anti-submarine squadron, 845 was equipped with Westland Whirlwind helicopters and a remit to perfect the use of airborne sonar equipment.

Disbanding briefly between October and November 1955, 845 took part in the Suez Crisis in March 1956, landing 515 Marines and 89 tons of equipment from HMS Theseus in history's first vertical assault.

Although Suez was a political failure, the military success of the landings was not ignored, and the

UK established amphibious forces capable of rapid deployment and response.

The backbone of these forces would be helicopters operating from large ships designed for amphibious warfare.

After disbanding again in April 1959 the squadron was reformed on April 10 1962 as a Commando Helicopter Squadron with Westland Wessex HAS1 aircraft.

While embarked aboard HMS Albion alongside sister Junglie unit 846 later that year, the ship was ordered to make best speed for Singapore to help quell the rebellion in Brunei and the subsequent Indonesian-inspired insurrection.

Troops were landed in Borneo and the squadron was immediately committed to supporting British forces ashore.

In enabling troops to patrol vast areas of the jungle while operating from the most basic of clearings, the two squadrons earned their Junglies soubriquet.

Having re-equipped with the Wessex HU5 (the squadron also operated Hillers and Wasps at various times), 845 spent a few quiet years on exercises all round the globe, and saw the inclusion of Lt The Prince Of Wales on Red Dragon flight.

Briefly absorbing 846 Squadron in September 1977, 845 went on to provide a permanent detachment in Northern Ireland from October 1977.

The squadron established a hard-earned reputation for trying its utmost to help troops in all weathers – in one month alone 845 flew 80 per cent of all support helicopter task hours with just one third of the available assets.

Their stay in Northern Ireland ended with the Argentine invasion of the Falklands in April 1982, when the squadron was deployed to the South Atlantic with the task group.

Aircraft and personnel were distributed between 14 ships during the operation, with one flight remaining on Ascension Island, and the squadron also operated from ashore, and like sister squadron 846 it had a crucial role in the initial landings at San Carlos and the land campaign which saw Stanley back under the Union Flag by mid-June.

The bulk of the unit returned to the UK in July 1982, having shifted troops, rescued sailors and troops from RFA Sir Galahad and carried out a rocket attack on Argentine forces in Stanley,



● A Wessex of 845 Squadron in the Long Jawi area of Sarawak, Borneo. The aircraft was damaged beyond repair in Malaysia in May 1965 while lifting a heavy load

amongst other actions.

In 1986 the squadron converted to the Sea King, a version of which it still flies today.

Since then 845 NAS has trained hard to be the UK's main contingency force capable of operating around the world.

845 was heavily involved in the first Gulf War before returning to the UK and re-establishing a presence in Northern Ireland between 1992 and 2002.

1990 also saw 845 support peacekeeping operations by the UN and NATO in former Yugoslavia – it was the first British helicopter squadron into the region, and was the last squadron to leave in 2005.

During the same period 845 also met commitments in Sierra Leone, and in 2003 took the first troops into Iraq during the crucial assault on the Al-Faw Peninsula in Iraq, earning the most recent of its five battle honours.

Having left Iraq in 2007, spending three years supporting the stabilisation effort, the squadron deployed to Afghanistan in early 2008 with upgraded Sea King Mk4 aircraft (the Mk4+), the helicopters being fitted with new rotor blades and tail rotors to cope with the challenging climate and altitude of Afghanistan, plus improved defensive kit to fend off the insurgent threat.



● A Wessex HU5 from 848 Naval Air Squadron flies past 'mother ship' HMS Bulwark in 1975

## From Hal Far to Far East

848 NAVAL Air Squadron started life in the same fashion as 845 and 846 Squadrons, forming up in America with Avenger torpedo bombers on June 1 1943 at Quonset Point.

The summer of 1944 was spent patrolling the Channel under the RAF's Coastal Command, then 848 headed to the Far East, taking part in strikes against airfields and shore installations, and deployed to join the assault on the Japanese mainland but VJ Day intervened.

Squadron personnel sailed home with HMS Victorious, leaving their aircraft in Australia, and the squadron disbanded at Devonport on October 31 1945.

The squadron's first encounter with helicopters came when it reformed at Gosport in October 1952, with ten ex-US Navy Sikorsky S-55s, designated Whirlwind HAR21s.

The aircraft left the UK in HMS Perseus in December 1952 bound for Sembawang, where they were pitched into the anti-terrorist battle in Malaya under the auspices of the RAF, flying out of Kuala Lumpur.

Five Whirlwind HAR1s were added to the squadron in October 1954, and 848 continued to serve until disbanding in Sembawang before Christmas 1956.

Less than two years later 848 re-emerged from C Flight of 728 Squadron at Hal Far airfield in Malta as an Amphibious Warfare Trials unit.

Flying Whirlwind HAS22s – more ex-US Navy Sikorsky S-55a – it was for a while known as 45 Heliforce as it operated with 45 Commando RM in Cyprus.

Still in a Commando role, 848 returned to the UK and re-equipped with Whirlwind HAS7s in late 1959.

The following spring the squadron sailed for an extensive tour to the Mediterranean and Far East and Australia with HMS Bulwark, returning at the end of 1962.

The following May part of the squadron was hived off to form 847 NAS while 848 disbanded in July.

The next appearance of the squadron saw it embark its Wessex HU5s on HMS Albion and head for hot-weather trials in Aden, continuing on to Singapore where it formed a headquarters flight and four sub-flights for a year.

Further trips to the Far East and Caribbean on Albion and Bulwark followed, and the squadron also had a role in the pollution-control operation after the tanker Torrey Canyon went aground off the Scilly Isles in 1967.

Disbanded at the end of March 1976, 848 was quickly reformed from 707 and 772 Squadrons as four flights in April 1982 and deployed south with elements of the task group; the aircraft of D Flight were lost when the Atlantic Conveyor was sunk on May 25.

Disbanded in late 1982, the squadron reappeared in November 1990 with Sea King HC4s to serve in the Gulf, winning the Kuwait battle honour the following year.

Disbanded at the end of 1991, the squadron appeared again in early 1995 as a renumbered 707 Squadron, responsible for training within the Command Helicopter Force.



● A Sea King of 845 NAS in IFOS livery flies a patrol over the Vrbas River, separating the Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats, in January 1996  
Picture: PO(Phot) Phil Ball

## turned into a marathon

longest-serving units which saw action in the Falklands Conflict, spending around six months on the islands in total.

And, job done (and Falkland Islands 1982 battle honour secured), the squadron was disbanded immediately after returning to the UK in the September 1982, when its role was taken over by 845 NAS.

It was 13 years before 847 once more appeared in the annals of the Royal Navy, when it reformed from 3 Cdo Bde Air Squadron at Yeovilton with Royal Marines pilots and REME engineers on 1 September 1995.

Designated a tactical support unit for the Royal Marines Commandos with Lynx AH7 and Gazelle AH1 helicopters – the latter were retired in March 2005 – 847 has always had close links to the Army, and Royal Marines aviators have played key roles as well.

In recent years the squadron has been active in Sierra Leone and in Kosovo, but perhaps the most significant deployment was to Operation Telic in Iraq.

In May 2006, one of the squadron's Lynx helicopters was shot down over Basra, killing five Service personnel including 847's Commanding Officer Lt Cdr Darren Chapman.



● A Wessex of 847 Squadron supports Exercise Subok in 1971, a landing on the Lingayen Gulf at Luzon Island by UK, US, Philippines, Australia and New Zealand forces. Also pictured are RFAs Sir Galahad (left) and Sir Lancelot



# Reflections and prospects



● Sea Kings of the Commando Helicopter Force recce a potential landing site in Northern Norway during Exercise Clockwork in March

Picture: PO(Phot) Mez Merrill

WHILE celebrating 50 years of being Junglies, the Commando Helicopter Force has also been looking back to another conflict.

Capt Matt Briers, CO Commando Helicopter Force, hosted a dinner at Yeovilton to honour Junglie veterans of the Falklands Conflict.

A group of 50 veterans, including 30 who served in the South Atlantic, were joined by 90 officers of the current community.

Amongst them was Air Marshal Andy Pulford, the RAF's Deputy Commander Capability, who was a 23-year-old Flight Lieutenant on exchange with 845 Squadron during the conflict.

Before the dinner, Capt Briers said: "This significant occasion is really focused on all those Junglie aviators who served in the Falklands."

"As part of our 30th anniversary commemorations the evening will enable us to honour some of the extremely brave and resourceful naval aviators who flew with great distinction in incredibly challenging terrain and atrocious

weather conditions.

"We also remember the eight Servicemen from CHF and 3rd Brigade Air Squadron who made the ultimate sacrifice for this country."

So the Junglies also served with distinction over the cold, bare hills and mountains of the windswept Falklands – and more recently added the arid heat of the Middle East to their roll of honour.

Last autumn saw a large part of the Force finally withdraw from Helmand Province at the end of a four-and-a-half year mission to Afghanistan.

The Sea Kings of 845 and 846 Squadrons deployed in 2007, and went on to transport more than 80,000 people and 700 tons of supplies while clocking up 12,500 hours on tasks or patrols.

Each six-tonne aircraft was stripped of rotors, aerials and its fuel tanks drained, 'bug-bombed' to remove all local organisms and then loaded into the back of a C-17 transport plane for the journey back to RAF Brize Norton, where they were re-assembled and made the final 70-mile hop home.

Since their return, CHF has returned to more traditional stamping-grounds, including Northern Norway for the annual Clockwork cold weather exercise.



● Sea Kings of 848 Naval Air Squadron visit HMS Bulwark during Operational Sea Training last summer in support of flight deck operations training

Picture: LA(Phot) Martin Carney

It is all part of the role of the four squadrons – 845, 846, 847 on the front line and 848, the training squadron – as the Commandos' dedicated air transport, providing crucial tailored air support to the green berets at sea or ashore.

But while looking back, there is also a new set of challenges for the Junglies to face in the coming months and years.

The venerable and much-loved Sea Kings of 845 and 846 are due to leave service in 2016, to be gradually replaced by the larger and more powerful Merlins.

And 847 is in line to receive the Wildcat, a supercharged version of the tried-and-tested Lynx, with an in-service date for the HMA (Helicopter Maritime Attack) variant set for early 2015.



Picture: PO(Phot) Ray Jones



Picture: Cpl S Dove (AGC)

● Clockwise from above: A Lynx of 847 Naval Air Squadron takes advantage of a break in snowstorms to operate from the flight deck of HMS Illustrious during Exercise Cold Response in March off the coast of northern Norway; A Sea King of 846 Squadron flies over Kandahar in Afghanistan; Lynx of 847 Squadron in flying operations from HMS Illustrious earlier this year; Junglie Sea Kings (and an Army Air Corps Apache attack helicopter) on the flight deck of HMS Illustrious



Picture: PO(Phot) Ray Jones



Picture: PO(Phot) Mez Merrill